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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
What should the CNMI do with the land alienation provision of the Constitution in 2011?

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INSIDE



Grisly Ambush

A teenage girl helped kill her mother and two brothers during a grisly weekend ambush on the family's home.

NATION...Page 14



People Power?

Corazon Aquino expects public protests over a corruption scandal to eventually force Arroyo to step down.

ASIA...Page 15

Winds of War

President Hugo Chavez ordered tanks and thousands of troops on Sunday to the border with Colombia.

WORLD...Page 16

'Banks must meet conditions for govt deposits' PAGE 3

Man allegedly assaults a female cop. PAGE 5

CDA may run Gardenia itself

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

If there are no qualified bids for the Pacific Gardenia Hotel come March 12, the Commonwealth Development Authority just might open up the hotel and run the business itself.

See CDA on Page 4

Budget proposal cuts unfilled posts by half

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The budget bill now under House consideration calls for a 50-percent reduction of vacant full-time positions in government.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Ray Yumul and cosponsored by nine other lawmakers on

Friday, requires that currently vacant full-time employee positions be left unfilled and reduced by one half.

This means that the government will have authority during fiscal year 2008 to fill half of the existing job vacancies in the government. Each hiring requires approval of the Legisla-

See BUDGET on Page 4



BOACH ROAD MISHAP

Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section officer Daniel Smith checks the severely damaged front of a Toyota Corolla ADJ 302 after it rear-ended a Ford Explorer with plate number ACA 075 along Beach Road yesterday afternoon. The incident is still under investigation. There were no immediate reports of casualties or the identities of the victims.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

'Miura's arrest, detention illegal'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Defense lawyers of Japanese businessman Kazuyoshi Miura argued in court yesterday that his detention is illegal and that the court should immediately release him.

"Mr. Miura's continued detention without any warrant whatsoever is illegal and must end," said Mark B. Hanson.

At the status conference, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman said that since he is the bail hearing judge, the motion to dismiss and for immediate release should be handled by another judge.

Wiseman said associate judge Ramona V. Manglona, who will preside

over the case, will hear the motion on Wednesday at 3pm.

The court was jam-packed with

representatives of the Japanese media covering the case. Nobody was

See ARREST on Page 4

Sakoda optimistic Miura case may soon be solved

By THOMAS WATKINS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

REDONDO BEACH, California (AP)—A retired Los Angeles police detective who led the investigation into an infamous shooting of a Japanese couple 27 years ago says U.S. authorities may have better luck prosecuting the case than their counterparts in Japan because of differences between the two countries' legal systems.

Jimmy Sakoda, 72, spent years with the Los Angeles Police Depart-

See SAKODA on Page 4



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Department of Corrections officers escort 60-year-old murder suspect Kazuyoshi Miura as he enters the Superior Court in Susupe Monday morning.

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Local



GROTTO MEMORIAL

Department of Lands and Natural Resources Forestry Division staff Jason Ada, James Babauta, Ben Cepeda, Mike Suarez and field supervisor John Limes clean and beautify the surroundings of the new monument in Grotto yesterday afternoon. The unveiling of the monument that memorializes the late Capt. Vicente Manglona Conception ("Ben-ki") is scheduled on Saturday, March 8.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Pula: OIA budget plan fortifies private sector

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The proposed budget for the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs will support private sector development in the insular areas, according to the lead official for Washington's relationships with U.S. territories and freely associated states.

Nikolao Pula, the acting deputy assistant secretary of insular affairs, recently told a congressional hearing that OIA's FY2009 budget request will "continue efforts to promote economic sustainability throughout the territories and freely associated states."

OIA administers, on behalf of the Interior secretary, the federal government's relationship with the territories of Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the CNMI. It also oversees financial aid to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau under the Compacts of Free Association.

OIA's budget request of \$401.6 million is divided into two major categories of funding—permanent or mandatory and current discretionary.

Most of OIA's budget reflects mandatory commitments to U.S.-affiliated insular areas and is permanently appropriated (\$321.7 million). This includes

\$113 million estimated for fiscal payments to Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands and \$208.7 million for payments under the Compacts of Free Association.

Within current appropriations, two activities are considered mandatory: Covenant grants (\$27.7 million) that provide for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) in the U.S. territories and an annual Health and Education Block Grant given to the Republic of Palau (\$2.0 million).

"The fiscal year 2009 OIA budget continues to focus on strategies that contribute to increasing the self-sufficiency of insular areas. OIA will continue to provide support to help develop more efficient and effective government in the insular areas through the various Assistance to Territories programs. This assistance includes grant funding to meet a variety of needs, including resources for critical infrastructure like wastewater systems, hospitals, and schools," Pula said at hearing held by the U.S. House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs.

He noted that in fiscal year 2007, OIA received over \$81 million in assistance to territories funding, providing over 90 percent of these funds to insular areas in the form of grants of financial assistance. OIA plans to continue this effort in fiscal year 2009, he said.

Ban sought vs smoking in public places in NMI

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Smoking may be banned in restaurants, bars, and workplaces in the Northern Marianas under a bill that has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

House Bill 16-47, sponsored by Rep. Justo S. Quitugua, proposes to make public places smoke-free. Exemptions include open-air bars, hotel rooms, and outdoor jobsites.

In his 14-page bill, Quitugua cites a long list of studies concerning ill health effects of secondhand smoke. He also says analyses have shown a link between a smoking ban

and the profitability of restaurants and hotels.

"It is the duty of the Commonwealth Legislature to provide a healthy and safe environment for the people of the CNMI as well as for visitors to our islands. This includes establishing smoke-free public and work places for the benefit of all, and particularly for the elderly and children," Quitugua states in his bill.

He adds that a smoking ban will protect the public health and welfare, and guarantee the right of nonsmokers to breathe smoke-free air, and recognize that "the need to breathe smoke-free air shall have priority over the desire to smoke."

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'Banks must meet conditions for govt deposits'

By **AGNES E. DONATO**
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund has urged lawmakers to pass a bill setting minimum requirements for banks to meet before any public

funds are deposited into them.

"This is a necessary legislation to safeguard government deposits and the time to pass this legislation is now," said Fund administrator Mark Aguon.

Under the bill, sponsored by

Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero, banks must meet certain criteria before they can receive government deposits.

Funds amounting to less than \$100,000 must be deposited only with banks insured

by a federal agency or a U.S. Treasury listed surety agency. All of the deposited funds in excess of the insurance coverage should be secured by bank assets valued at all time at 100 percent of the excess funds.

Bank assets that serve as collateral for the public funds should be in the form of U.S. Treasury bonds and U.S. government agency securities.

The proposed legislation also directs the Department of Finance to issue regulations for the selection of banks that comply with the standards set by the Commerce Department.

The measure addresses concerns raised by the Office of the Public Auditor in 2002 in relation to government deposits. The audit came after the collapse of Bank of Saipan placed approximately \$16 million in government deposits at risk.

Aguon expressed regret that previous attempts to pass the bill had failed. The bill in vari-

ous forms has been introduced in the past, but has failed to become law.

He said the bill is a proactive approach in the prevention of some of the problems the Commonwealth financial system has encountered in the past.

According to Aguon, the proposed criteria are necessary to keep government deposits from being "frozen" in banks with questionable management practices, financial viability problems and or cross-collateralizations.

He added that the proposed competition procedure for eligible banks was "quite well founded," as it allows the government to select a bank with the best possible rate of return.

By **TERESA WATANABE**
LOS ANGELES TIMES STAFF WRITER

Retired LAPD Lt. Jimmy Sakoda stepped before no less than 11 TV cameras and dozens of reporters Saturday to speak about a Los Angeles homicide case he has followed for more than 25 years. Dressed in a dapper dark suit and gray tie, Sakoda offered no new details about the convoluted case involving Kazuyoshi Miura, a Japanese businessman who allegedly conspired to kill his wife on a downtown Los Angeles street in 1981. More than a decade after being acquitted of the crime in Japan, Miura was arrested Feb. 22 by U.S. authorities in Saipan acting on a warrant issued years ago by Los Angeles police and the district attorney's office on charges of murder and conspiracy.

But to the roomful of mostly Japanese journalists—who not only attended but also arranged the Redondo Beach news conference—Sakoda's appearance was news enough. It gave them one more peg for one more story to feed the voracious appetite in Japan for news, any news, about a case considered much bigger than O.J. Simpson's.

Like Simpson, Miura has persistently proclaimed his innocence.

Since Miura's arrest in Saipan, dozens of reporters have been dispatched to Los Angeles from Tokyo, New York and Washington, D.C. Scrambling for any shred of

Miura case draws media frenzy

news, they have plied the police with interview requests, camping out at the home of Los Angeles Police Department Chief William J. Bratton. They have tracked down old witnesses and prosecutors and bombarded Sakoda until he finally agreed to speak Saturday. Among those present was Noriaki Takada from Nippon TV, who flew in from New York

and evening editions on every angle they can think of. (Angles include an interview with LAPD Det. Rick Jackson, reaction of the Japanese American community, the involvement of Sakoda, and differences in Japanese and U.S. legal processes.) "It's really tiring," Matsuo said with a laugh. "It's hard to find new developments."

The mass convergence of



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Japanese media take a video of 60-year-old murder suspect Kazuyoshi Miura as he is brought inside the CNMI Superior Court in Susupe Monday morning.

and may have to forgo coverage of the space shuttle launch in Florida for Miura, he said.

Hiroo Watanabe, a Washington, D.C., correspondent from Japan's newspaper Sankei Shimbun, said he was taken off the presidential campaign for round-the-clock coverage of Miura; he will miss the Texas primary Tuesday as he and his Los Angeles bureau colleague, Michiya Matsuo, churn out stories every day for both morning

Japanese reporters on Saipan, a U.S. commonwealth territory where Miura is being held while L.A. authorities seek his extradition, has revived the ailing taxi industry, according to the *Saipan Tribune*. The newspaper reported that more than 100 Japanese reporters had arrived in Saipan, paying taxi drivers as much as \$450 a day, compared with their normal daily earnings of \$15 or less.

Obsession with the Miura

case, several reporters said, has stemmed from its dramatic twists and turns over more than two decades. Miura was initially portrayed as a "tragic hero" who personified every Japanese tourist's fear of being harmed in the United States' crime-ridden inner cities, one reporter said. Miura had said two men shot him in the leg and his wife, Kazumi, in the head and robbed them while they were visiting Los Angeles.

In the mid-1980s, however, the Bungei Shunju magazine came out with a sensational series of articles that overturned that image and raised suspicions that Miura had planned the killing to collect \$650,000 in insurance money.

As Los Angeles and Japanese police worked together, Miura was convicted of the crime by a Japanese court in 1994 and sentenced to life in prison. But that decision was reversed by the Tokyo High Court in 1998 when a judge determined that the wife's assailant was unknown.

After Miura's release from prison in Japan, he fashioned himself as a human rights advocate for those wrongly prosecuted, holding monthly forums about the issue. He wrote a book and made a movie about himself, and aggressively—and often successfully—sued news organizations for defamation. Even today, several Japanese reporters said, Miura enjoys celebrity and support from some scholars

See **MIURA** on Next Page

Another in human smuggling gets 28 days

The Superior Court has imposed a 28-day prison term on a man who was among 12 persons rescued from a stranded boat by the U.S. Coast Guard in their attempt to unlawfully enter Guam.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Zilin Deng to two years in prison, all suspended except for 28 days, for improper entry into the U.S. by an alien.

Manglona gave the 39-year-old Deng 28 days credit for the time he had already served in jail.

The judge placed the defendant on two years of unsupervised probation and required him to pay a \$100 court assessment fee.

Manglona said Deng shall be deported from the CNMI and shall leave at his own expense within 30 days of the court's acceptance of his plea.

Deng will not be allowed to return to the CNMI.

Deng's co-defendant, Yanong

Lin Doone, was earlier sentenced to 19 days in prison, with credit for the 19 days she had already served in jail.

The case against Edwin F. Blanilla is pending in court.

The three were among 12 persons who were rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard from a disabled CNMI-registered boat that was stranded 20 nautical miles northwest of Guam in June 2007.

The government filed deportation cases against the nine others persons.

Immigration inspector Erwin Flores stated in court papers that the 11 Chinese nationals, including Doone, had no passports in their possession, nor did they have any type of visa authorizing them to enter Guam.

The pilot, Blanilla, was supposed to drop the Chinese off so they could enter Guam. In exchange for dropping them off, he was allegedly to receive the boat as payment. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



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Nauru suggests boat repair industry

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Nauru’s Foreign and Finance Minister, Dr Kieren Keke, says Australia might help the island become a center for fishing vessel maintenance

and servicing. He says this is one of the ideas discussed in talks he had this week in Canberra with the Australia Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith, following

the closure of the detention centre on the island. Dr Keke says Mr Smith showed a willingness to share views of a range of issues aimed at minimising the economic impact of the centre shutting down.

He says Nauru is not looking for aid handouts but help to get the island back onto its feet through practical assistance. Dr Keke says the talked about the revitalised phosphate industry and other sectors they are trying to develop.

“Such as fisheries or more specifically setting up Nauru as a site that can service fishing vessels in the region. As well as some other ideas we have got in the private sector - small business development and attracting foreign manufacturing into Nauru.”

MIURA

From Page 3

and human rights activists for raising the concept of presumed innocence. “It’s a haunted case,” Matsuo said. Matsuo said an “underground network” in Japan has closely followed Miura, and a few days before his arrest in Saipan, rumors had flown that

he might be nabbed. When the story landed on The Times website Feb. 23, Matsuo said he got a call from Tokyo almost immediately. He’s been covering the story ever since. For his part, Sakoda told reporters that he always viewed Miura as a prime suspect but that other investigators within the LAPD’s major crimes unit began focusing more on “two male hippie types.” The divergence caused

“a great deal of frustration, a great deal of internal difficulties,” he said. The retired police lieutenant, who has no formal role in the case at the moment, said he was pleased that the investigation had refocused on Miura and explained why he relentlessly tracked him, even after retirement. According to the LAPD’s Jackson, it was Sakoda who tipped off police to Miura’s visit to Saipan.

A 26-year police veteran, Sakoda served as head of the LAPD’s Asian Task Force until 1984, then worked as a detective in the L.A. County district attorney’s Asian criminal investigation unit from 1985 until 1999. He currently runs his own private risk assessment firm. Sakoda said some of his drive to see the case to its end stemmed from a professional sense of responsibility that

most law enforcement officers have. But some of it, he said, was personal. He had gotten to know the victim’s parents and sister, and felt a sense of obligation and duty to them as a Japanese American, he said. “I just can’t see someone get away with something like this,” Sakoda said. “I didn’t spend my whole 24 hours, seven days a week on this, but I did keep tabs on him.”

SAKODA

From Page 1

ment and later as a district attorney’s investigator trying to bring Kazuyoshi Miura to trial for the murder of his wife. The vacationing couple were shot in a daylight attack as they took photos of the downtown Los Angeles skyline in 1981. He was hit in the thigh and she was shot in the head, dying from her wounds a year later. Miura has denied any involvement in the shooting and said he was attacked by robbers. Authorities suspect Miura hatched a plot to have his wife killed so he could collect hundreds of thousands of dol-

lars in life insurance pay-outs. He was recently arrested while on a trip to the U.S. territory of Saipan and is awaiting extradition to California to face murder and conspiracy charges. Miura was arrested on warrants crafted by Sakoda and others in May 1988. His lawyer, Shinichiro Hironaka, has said he will ask the Japanese government not to help U.S. investigators because the case has been closed in Japan. The 60-year-old clothing importer was originally prosecuted in Japan, with authorities in Tokyo working closely with Sakoda and other Los Angeles investigators. He was convicted of murder, but that verdict was overturned a decade ago due to problems

with the evidence. Sakoda said key differences exist between U.S. and Japanese courts. Chiefly, he said, the Japanese legal system does not allow for the prosecution of conspiracy charges. “The Japanese prosecutors and police... realized that they would have a difficult time prosecuting because of the laws that they did or did not have,” Sakoda said. “We’ve always felt that we had a very strong case, and the Japanese felt they had an uphill battle,” he added. Sakoda spoke at a news conference at a Redondo Beach hotel. The case, which is of intense interest in Japan, has brought hordes of reporters to his home in a nearby Los Angeles suburb,

and Sakoda said he hoped addressing them all at once might afford him more privacy. The 1981 shooting caused a sensation in Japan, feeding into fears that the U.S. was a dangerous place. Los Angeles officials, who were trying to project a safe image as they prepared to host the 1984 Olympics, were angered at what they considered stereotyping. Sakoda also said he believes he knows who actually shot Miura’s wife but cannot prove it. He declined to reveal that person’s name. After leaving the Police Department in 1985, Sakoda joined the Los Angeles County district attorney’s office as an investigator. One of his first acts there was to look into the Miura case. Until

then, he said, police officials still accepted Miura’s version of events. “To be honest, it was not really done with any effort,” Sakoda said of the police investigation. Although the U.S. and most state constitutions prohibit trying someone twice for the same crime, California legislators passed a law in 2004 allowing someone who was tried in another country to stand trial again here for the same offense. If convicted, a person receives credit for time already served in another country. In Miura’s case, that would be nearly 13 years.

Associated Press Writer Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

ARREST

From Page 1

allowed to bring in a camera to record the proceedings. At yesterday’s hearing, chief prosecutor Jeffery Warfield said he had just received a copy of Miura’s motion and that the government should be given time to review it. Warfield maintained that the defendant’s arrest and detention are lawful. Hanson stressed that since Miura has been held illegally for 11 days now, the court should proceed with the hearing that day or even that afternoon. Hanson cited that preliminary and arraignment hearings were set in this case when in fact it is not a criminal case but an extradition matter. “Mr. Miura has been detained for 11 days now, basically with no arrest war-

rant,” the lawyer pointed out. Hanson said the government did not follow the extradition procedures. Because there was no finding of probable cause that the arrest was lawful at the initial hearing, he said the continued detention of Miura is therefore illegal. Warfield agreed that there was no arrest warrant, but he cited that the CNMI has a statute for warrantless arrests. Hanson insisted on a hearing yesterday. “This court cannot detain him right now,” he said. Warfield said that when the court decided not to grant bail at the initial hearing, the judge made the determination that the arrest was lawful. Wiseman said he is not going to make a decision because Manglona will handle the case. Wiseman said he will confer with Manglona whether a hearing will be

held prior to Wednesday’s schedule. Miura’s other lawyer, Bruce Berline, said the 13 steps in the extradition process were not followed in this case. “Mr. Miura-san is being held illegally. We must address this today,” said Berline, who, prior to the hearing, had installed in court tools for a slide show. Wiseman again ruled that he will not make a decision on the matter. He also vacated the preliminary hearing and arraignment that were scheduled March 5 and 10, saying they are not proceedings on this type of action. In Miura’s motion, Hanson said their client was arrested at the Saipan International Airport on Feb. 22, but he was not taken before a judge until three days later at 1:30pm on Feb. 25, 2008. Hanson said the affidavit issued by Attorney General’s Investigative Unit investigator Edward R. Cabrera in sup-

port of the warrantless arrest of Miura did not indicate whether Miura now stands charged of a crime in California. Hanson said the affidavit also did not indicate whether Miura stands charged with a crime punishable by death or imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, nor whether he “fled from justice” in California. That same day, Hanson said, the Attorney General’s Office filed a criminal information charging Miura with one count of being a fugitive from justice. “The information was not under oath and recited no facts,” he said. On Feb. 27, Hanson said, the information filed by the AGO was amended to reflect that it was self-styled “complaint for extradition.” “Again, the complaint was not under oath and recited no facts to support its conclusion therein,” he said.

Hanson said it appears that on Oct. 18, 2007, Los Angeles Detective Rick Jackson faxed to Cabrera a felony complaint for arrest warrant sworn out in 1988. “The 1988 arrest warrant complaint is not authenticated,” Hanson said. To date, Hanson said, no governor’s warrant from the State of California has been delivered to the CNMI governor for the extradition of Miura despite the fact that both governments have known for over four months that Miura was going to visit Saipan. “Presently, Mr. Miura is being held in the Saipan correctional facility by the Commonwealth Department of Corrections despite the fact that no fugitive warrant has been issued for Mr. Miura’s arrest and detention pending the issuance, if at all, of a Governor’s Warrant by the Governor of California,” Hanson said.

BUDGET

From Page 1

ture by joint resolution. The remaining 50 percent will be eliminated and the government FTE ceiling will be reduced accordingly. The proposed appropriation act sets a ceiling of 4,453 FTEs government-wide, including the self-funding Department of Public Lands. The administration has identified 267

vacant positions that it wants filled. The vacancies include positions for police officers, firemen, correction officers, attorneys, and investigators. The Governor’s Office has also said there are at least 964 vacant positions the government cannot fund in fiscal year 2008. In related news, the budget bill includes provisions for increased salary caps for licensed professionals working in government and certain government appointees.

The bill restores pay cuts that were made because last fiscal year’s budget left out special provisions allowing for the raised salary ceilings. Under the bill, attorneys, certified public accountants and lawyers may receive up to \$70,000 a year. The professionals had been covered by such ceiling from Oct. 1, 1998 and Sept. 30, 2006, according to special provisions in the budgets for those years. But because the FY2007 budget law did not include a similar provision, the salary

ceiling for these professionals reverted to \$50,000 for the first time in eight years. The House bill also grants the governor’s request in his proposed budget proposal, which is to increase salary caps for department secretaries and other management positions in government. The governor has asked the Legislature to restore administrative provisions in the 2003 budget act, which allowed these mostly appointed officials to make more than \$50,000 a year. According to data prepared by the

Office of Management Budget, the requested adjustments would affect a total of 74 positions and cost the government an additional \$556,600. In addition to assistant attorneys general, the cap hike will benefit employees at the Governor’s Office, Rota and Tinian municipal governments, and the departments of Public Works, Community and Cultural Affairs, Commerce, Finance, Lands and Natural Resources, Labor, Public Health, Public Safety, and Corrections.

CDA

From Page 1

According to acting CDA executive director Oscar Camacho, since the request for proposals for Pacific Gardenia was put out, there have been a number of phone calls and visits showing interest in the property but “we’ve not had any solid or concrete proposals just yet.” The deadline for the acceptance of bids for the beachfront property is on

March 12. “I’m not sure if they’re waiting for the last day to submit their offers or what, but next week is the deadline,” said Camacho. “We really want to turn on the lights, clean it up and open it up for business. I really don’t like the way we’re seeing it now,” he added. Camacho said the agency was hoping they could get between \$850,000 to half a million dollars for the property when the initial bid for Pacific

Gardenia was put out after being acquired by CDA. “There were clear indications that people were willing to buy it for half a million dollars but that did not happen,” Camacho said. The minimum bid for the property is set at a million dollars. Camacho said that there are ideas for the place if no one submits a proposal by March 12. “We can clean up the sides and rent out the restaurant and then have some-

body run it—it doesn’t matter what kind just as long as it is something that provides for economic activity. That would be better than nothing. Who knows, maybe they’ll take the rooms as well and run it,” Camacho said. The properties, which were foreclosed by the CDA, include three lots: a 780-square-meter 14-room hotel and restaurant; a 1,017-square-meter beach area; and a 479-square-meter parking area and home between the hotel and the beach.

In July 2007, CDA had received proposers and closed the solicitation for the lease of Pacific Gardenia Hotel & Sunset Beach Bar but the process was put on hold due to unresolved legal issues. Pacific Gardenia has standing tax obligation of \$1.4 million which CDA and the Finance Department agreed to settle internally. The CNMI government stands to receive 30 percent from the sale of the property.

Man allegedly assaults a female cop

By **FERDIE DELA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man accused of stealing a car and engaging a police sergeant

Settlement talk between 2 groups turns into ugly riot

A talk between two groups of men who were trying to settle their past differences turned into an ugly riot that resulted in one man losing consciousness and his brother being injured at the Micro Beach pavilion in Garapan Saturday early morning.

Andave Marchadesch became unconscious after being struck in the head, resulting in a superficial laceration above the right eyebrow. His brother, Spencer Marchadesch, suffered a broken right wrist. Both were treated at the Commonwealth Health Center.

One suspect, David Muna Sablan, 29, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

An \$11,500 cash bail was initially set for Sablan's temporary liberty. He was set to appear at a bail hearing yesterday afternoon.

Detective Jeffrey F. Olopai stated in his report that on Saturday at 3:58am, police responded to a call about a riot incident at Micro Beach.

Preliminary investigation showed that the two Marchadesch brothers were drinking with other individuals at the Micro Beach pavilion. David Sablan and his brother Ben Sablan, along with other friends, were also in the group.

Olopai stated that, accord-

ing to Andave Marchadesch, he and his brother Spencer Marchadesch and Ben Sablan were talking to settle their past differences.

Spencer Marchadesch, however, refused to shake Ben Sablan's hand. This angered David Sablan, who allegedly punched Andave Marchadesch on the head, triggering a fight.

Several friends of David Sablan and Ben Sablan started kicking and punching Andave Marchadesch in the body and legs.

David Sablan ran to his car and took a rifle from the trunk, which he used to hit Andave Marchadesch on the right eyebrow. David Sablan also swung the rifle at Andave Marchadesch on the neck, causing the latter to lose consciousness.

All these happened as Spencer Marchadesch and Ben Sablan continued fighting on the side.

David Sablan then left the area on board a Honda four-door sedan.

Later, a police officer pulled over the Honda car driven by David Sablan. During a consent search, the officer recovered a black barrel of an airgun rifle. The butt of the rifle appeared to have been broken off and was missing, police said.

David Sablan was then arrested. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

Nickson J. Hartman, 26, was arrested for theft, resisting arrest, assault and battery, and assault with a dangerous weapon.

A \$10,000 cash bail was initially set for Hartman's temporary liberty. A bail hearing was set yesterday afternoon before Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona.

Detective George F. David stated in his report that on Friday night, an employee of Dolphin Wholesale Store in San Jose saw Hartman walking into the store and taking a Tanduay Rum from the liquor rack.

The employee watched Hartman because he had seen the man earlier that night sitting in front of the store and drinking alcoholic beverages.

While watching from a distance, the employee saw the defendant taking a bottle of Tanduay Rum and putting it inside his pants. The employee informed a co-worker about the incident.

Hartman then passed the cashiers' counter and exited the store's entrance without paying for the liquor.

The two employees confronted Hartman and told him to wait, but the defendant ran away, taking with him the Rum bottle.

The two employees chased the defendant toward San Jose Church but lost sight of him by the Morgen Building.

Responding police officer Catherine Pangelinan met

with the two employees by the Morgen Building and they searched the ground floor and second floor.

As Pangelinan began searching the third floor men's restroom area, she found Hartman sitting on top of the toilet bowl.

The officer instructed Hartman to step out. The defendant was seen holding in his right hand a carryon bag containing the liquor.

As Pangelinan started to question the defendant, he attempted to run away by pushing her out from the restroom's doorway. The policewoman, however, held him.

As the two struggled, Hartman allegedly struck the female officer in the face with the rum

bottle, causing the bottle to fall and break on the floor.

Throughout the struggle, other officers arrived and secured the defendant in handcuffs.

Last New Year's Eve, the allegedly intoxicated Hartman stole a vehicle and engaged Police Sergeant Anthony Macaranas in a car chase from Garapan Elementary School to Capital Hill.

Hartman only stopped when the vehicle that he allegedly stole ran off the roadway, sideswiped a power pole, and rammed into a tree trunk along Guguan Drive in Capital Hill.

Hartman suffered head injuries during the struggle. His case is pending in court.

In May 2006, Hartman was arrested after he allegedly burglarized a house on Capital Hill that he had also burglarized a month earlier. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

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AMIM looking to increase military's presence in NMI

By **RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN**
rienne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Association of Mariana Islands Mayors are looking to adopt a resolution that would increase the presence of the United States military on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, Rota and the Northern Islands.

The resolution, authored by Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council member Felipe Atalig, said the Northern Mariana Islands are very much likely to economically benefit from the military increase.

Atalig said the increased presence of the military in the NMI would "certainly stimulate economic development."

"I see that the integration of military personnel may assist us in building more homes and classrooms," he said.

The resolution reads that the present level of U.S. military-related presence on Saipan contributes significantly to the Commonwealth economy. "An

increased military presence would further buttress the CNMI's economic progress especially in times of recession and economic stagnation."

The CNMI economy is currently in the doldrums due to the pullout of Japan Airlines and the collapse of the Saipan garment industry, just to name a few.

Atalig said that the U.S. military could use the buildings on Capital Hill that have remained vacant for a numbers of years.

With this resolution, it is believed that the NMI can be a part of whatever benefits the military presence might entail.

"On an economic point of view, we can try to utilize equal distribution of funds" from the military. "When we have these distributions, for sure the NMI will be equally benefited as Guam," Atalig said.

He added that the adoption of this resolution will serve in a way to ease overcrowding of the military on Guam.

'The Play Buffet' set to debut this Friday

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The theater ensemble group Voices of the Marianas is revving up for its newest production, *The Play Buffet: A Little Something for Everybody's Taste*, which is scheduled to debut this Friday, 7pm, at the American Memorial Park.

Producer and director Barbara Sher said this year's 15-member production will include a wide range of cast, from high school students to people in their late 60s, all of whom had written their own stories and it is her job to weave them altogether to come out with one play.

"Basically, they write their own stories and decide how they want to present it. There is no rule about what the story should



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some of the members of the cast of *The Play Buffet*. Left to right, Chiara Fudge, Brad Ruzsala, Nahal Navidar, Barbara Sher, and Elizabeth Henke.

be about, it could be about whatever they want whether a personal story or a made-up story," Sher said.

She said this format fulfills one objective of the Voices of Marianas: "The way we can get cultural diversities is to hear people's stories and see all the ways in which we are all alike."

Last year's production, *In Transit*, was about people from different cultures on Saipan telling their stories while stuck at the airport because of a typhoon.

Just like *In Transit*, *The Play Buffet* is formed from a variety of monologues that are locally written and then woven together to form a story.

According to Sher, there were at least 120 seats at the American Memorial Park theater and

all tickets for last year's production were all sold out.

The Play Buffet will be presented March 7, 8, 13, and 14 at 7pm at the American Memorial Park Theater.

Tickets are available for \$5 from cast members, at the door, or inquire via e-mail at barbara.sher@gmail.com.

"The reason why it is so inexpensive for live theater is because we really want to encourage people to go," Sher said.

She added that the theater group wants to encourage individuals to appreciate live theater especially "those who have never done it before."

"The premise behind Voices of Marianas is that anyone who want to tell their stories can and we figure out how to put it all together," Sher said.

Income tax return forms available starting Friday

The Division of Revenue and Taxation said that the 2007 Individual Income Tax Return forms and instructions will be ready for distribution beginning Friday, March 7, 2008 from 7:30am, at the office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation located at the Joeten Dan Dan Commercial Center.

These forms and instruction are already available on the Department of Finance website at www.dof.gov.mp.

The Division of Revenue and Taxation also said that its window service assistance for the filing of the 2007 individual income tax returns is not available yet, and will be announced at a later time. Window service will only be

made available to those individuals filing a 1040EZ-CM.

"Window service pertains to the assistance we provide to taxpayers in filling out the tax forms. Taxpayer's assistance, however, will be available to answer any general questions on tax matters pertaining to the filing of the 2007 income tax returns," said Estrellita S. Ada, director of Revenue and Taxation.

The deadline for filing the 2007 Individual Income Tax Return is Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at the office of the Division of Revenue and Taxation. The office will remain open until 9:30pm on April 15 to receive tax returns. (Rev&Tax)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Open forum on PL 15-108, regs

The Department of Labor invites small businesses to attend an Educational Outreach Forum on PL 15-108 and its Implementing Regulations at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 11, 2008, at the Multi-Purpose Complex in Susupe.

A copy of PL 15-108 and its Implementing Regulations may be downloaded through the Department's new jobs website, www.marianaslabor.net, said Cinta M. Kaipat, deputy secretary of Labor.

Everyone is encouraged to attend this FREE informational session. For information on this session, contact either Kaipat or HR Manager Bobbie Sablan at 236-0900. (Labor)

Appointee to Rota Casino Commission

Pursuant to the Rota Casino Act of 2007, the 12th Rota Municipal Council hereby gives notice to the public that it has officially received the appointees of the Rota Mayor for the Rota Casino Commission.

As per section (3) of the Rota Casino Act of 2007, the 12th Rota Municipal Council will be conducting the initial public hearing on March 25, 2006, 6pm, at the Rota Supreme Court-Sinapalo II. The appointee is Melchor Atalig Mendiola. (PR)

Local families needed to host students

The Office of the Mayor of Saipan is expecting 30 young

Japanese students from the Osima Maritime International High School of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government of Japan.

The students will be arriving on March 21, 2008 and they will be here on Saipan until March 28, 2008. The students will be on island for a weeklong educational trip.

Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela is inviting Saipan families to sponsor these young students from Japan for about a week. The Saipan Mayor's Office is still looking for interested families to open their homes and to help sponsor these young students.

If you are interested on hosting and sponsoring a student, or two students, contact the Mayor's Youth Programs coordinator Olinka Chaudhry at:

234-6208, 234-6280, or 235-7304. (PR)

OES PTSA meeting set

The PTSA Officers of Oleai Elementary School would like to inform the parents and guardians of Oleai Elementary School that there will be a PTSA meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2008, 6p. in the school cafeteria. Everyone is encouraged to attend. (PR)

Storytime for Toddlers

The Joeten Kiyu Public Library is hosting "Storytime for Toddlers" every Monday at 10:30am, with Wendy Rider, at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's Children of our Homeland Center. (PR)

WSR Elementary School March events

March 1 Scripps Spelling Bee Competition on Guam
March 5 Parent Advisory Council Meeting, 5:00p.m. Principal's Office
March 9- 15 Girl Scout Week
March 8 PGFC Regional Competition, MHS
March 8 6th Grade Math Court Competition
March 10 Flag Ceremony, 8am, New Stage
March 10 Science Fair judging
March 11 Science Fair Viewing, 8am- 2pm, Room G-2
March 11 National Jr. Honor Society Meeting, 2:30pm, Room G-2
March 12 Pizza Night Fund-raising
March 12 February/March Diner's Club
March 12 PTSA Meeting, 6pm, Cafeteria
March 15 NJFL Regional Competition, MHS
March 15 Kinder-5th Math Court Competition, MHS
March 17 St. Patrick's Day (Wear Green Day)
March 18 3rd Quarter ends
March 22 Chamorro Carolinian Language Heritage Studies Parent Seminar

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- Above discounts good for up to 6 persons (including VIP cardholder)

Labor now requires all jobs to be advertised

Under a new policy, the CNMI Department of Labor is now requiring all jobs of any kind for which an employer wants to hire a foreign worker to be posted on the department's new jobs web-site, www.marianaslabor.net.

"In the past, we had waivers of various kinds, but no more," said Cinta M. Kaipat, deputy secretary of Labor. "Every job, whether it is permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time, TWA or casual labor—absolutely everything will be on the website for citizens and permanent residents who are looking for jobs."

"The website is free," Kaipat said, "so there is no expense to an employer in posting the job. And the department acts quickly in referring citizens and permanent residents for jobs on the website postings, so there is no delay."

The department has had objections to the all-inclusive posting requirement from employers who say their jobs are just temporary or that they are small businesses not required to hire local citizens.

"I have dealt with the objec-

tions," Kaipat said, "and my decision is that all jobs will be posted. I know that at the end of the road, perhaps the department cannot require all categories of employers to hire a local citizen, but we certainly should assume that every employer will want to do the right thing. If a qualified citizen comes along, an employer who is a part of this community should hire that person whether they are forced to do so by the Labor Department or not."

The website provides a useful informational tool for the community. "The department's policy on posting all jobs means that the community knows about all jobs for which foreign national workers are being considered. Also, the community knows how many jobs are out there at any given time. This is useful to legislators whose constituents may be looking for jobs," Kaipat reported.

"Some of our citizens need to work part-time or they want to work for only a few months because they have family responsibilities," Kaipat said. "That is the reason I want all the part-

time, temporary, and TWA jobs posted."

The Labor Department's objective is to find suitable employment opportunities for as many citizens and permanent residents as possible.

"We are also posting jobs so that our on-island foreign workers can know about the jobs available for them," Kaipat said. The Labor Department enforces a secondary preference for on-island foreign workers. "Finding jobs for our on-island foreign workers is better policy than bringing in new foreign workers to the Commonwealth," Kaipat said.

The Labor Department is enforcing the emergency regulations published in December 2007 that prevent employers from bringing new unskilled workers to the Commonwealth while the workers displaced by garment factory closures are being absorbed into new jobs.

"We have registered many foreign workers who are looking for unskilled jobs, so we have no problem supplying unskilled labor to any employer who needs it," reported Alfred Pangelinan, Director of Employment Services.



Kaipat



COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 235-7147

Email: administration@cda.gov.mp • Website: www.cda.gov.mp



INVITATION TO BID PACIFIC GARDENIA HOTEL SUNSET BAR & GRILL

The Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) is soliciting bids for the sale of the PACIFIC GARDENIA HOTEL SUNSET BAR & GRILL. Sale includes CDA's interest in the following sites:

- | | | | |
|----------|----------------|-------------|---|
| • Site 1 | - Lot 008 H 33 | - 1,017 sqm | Sunset Bar & Grill |
| • Site 2 | - Lot 008 H 36 | - 479 sqm | Residential Home |
| • Site 3 | - Lot 008 H 37 | - 780 sqm | Hotel |
| • Site 4 | - Lot 008 H 29 | - 950 sqm | Parking north of hotel (leasehold interest) |
| • Site 5 | - Lot 008 H 31 | - 1,413 sqm | Former Seoul Rest.(subject to lease) |

LOTS ARE FREE OF CNMI TAX LIENS AND REDEMPTION PERIOD, BUT TITLE IS NOT OTHERWISE WARRANTED.

The sale shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Minimum bid - \$1,000,000.00.
2. Sale will be granted to the highest bidder.
3. PGH Lots are being sold as a package.
4. PGH Lots are being sold at its current condition, "**AS IS**".
5. PGH Lots are being sold "**WITHOUT WARRANTY**" of any type.
6. CDA reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw this notice and postpone the sale from time to time.

Interested party or person may contact Oscar C. Camacho, Acting Chief Executive Officer (ACEO) at 234-6245 or 234-7145 for further information. Failure to inspect the property will not constitute grounds for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer. All sales are final.

A deposit of 10% of the total price bid must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten (10) days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten (10) days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the aforementioned property will revert to CDA.

Interested party or person is asked to submit their bid at the CDA Saipan Office in a sealed envelop identified as "Pacific Gardenia Hotel Bid" addressed to Mr. Oscar C. Camacho, ACEO. Deadline to submit bid is **10:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, 2008.**

Dated this 12th day of February 2008.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

/s/ Oscar C. Camacho
Acting Chief Executive Officer



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS State Board of Education Public School System P.O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950



INVITATION FOR BID IFB 08-020

The Public School System and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **School and Office Furniture, Computers, LCD Projectors, and Accessories for Marianas High School, Saipan and Tinian Elementary School, Tinian**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-020" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office, no later than **March 25, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-020, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1)-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of \$ 3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of \$.50 per hour that is scheduled to take effect on May 26, 2008 and extending further, until the hourly rate equals that of the Federal Minimum Wage of \$ 7.50 per hour.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with CNMI Public School System Procurement Regulations. Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and the Contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

The CNMI Public School System hereby notifies bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

Pursuant to the Governor's Directive 251 dated March 15, 2006, bidders are required to include a Clearance from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner with respect to the financial bonding capability of the bidders' chosen Surety.

Performance time for completion of this project is ninety (90) Calendar days beginning with the date of Notice to Proceed. The Contractor shall pay to the CNMI Public School System the greater sum of U.S. \$100.00 per day (One Hundred Dollars), or 2% of the total contract price divided by the number of calendar days of the contract time, not as a penalty, but as reasonable liquidated damages for failing, neglecting, or refusing to complete the work within the time herein specified, and said sums shall be paid for each consecutive calendar day that the Contractor shall be in default beyond the time stipulated for completing the work.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, questions may be e-mailed to the following address: delacruz@pss.cnmi.mp.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the CNMI Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Manuel A. Sablan
NMHC Board Chairman

/S/ Carl de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands State Board of Education Public School System P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950



Invitation For Bid IFB 08-025

The Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, installation, and assembly of **Classroom Furniture and Audio Equipment for Saipan Southern High School, Saipan**. Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-025" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than **March 11, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.** Responsibility Determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-025, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility Determination" (one (1)-original and one (1)-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer, via the following fax number: (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: delacruz@pss.cnmi.mp. Questions shall be submitted at least three (3) business days prior to the deadline to submit bids.

General inquiries may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 or 3035.

Bidders are required to submit with their bid, a copy of their valid CNMI Business License.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids, in whole or in part, if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. de la Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P&S Officer

Beautify CNMI award nominations deadline

The committee chairs of Beautify CNMI are seeking nominations for their annual Beautify CNMI Steward and Beautify CNMI Champion awards. The two awards will be given out at the annual Beautify CNMI anniversary dinner to take place on March 27.

The awards are given out to recognize the individuals or groups who have been environmental leaders during the past 12 months.

There are two award categories: the Environmental Steward and the Environmental Champion.

The Steward award recognizes a person or group that leads

the community in activities that help protect the environment in a variety of ways. This individual or group has demonstrated the need to take pride in the islands and to take care of the place we all call home. They serve as an example for others, especially the next generation, to follow.

The Champion award recognizes a person or group that exemplifies the Beautify CNMI spirit. Those qualities include volunteerism, cooperation, innovation, creativity and the ability to infect others with the Beauty Virus. The Environmental Champion is a role model for others to follow. They bring environmental issues to the fore-

front of public consciousness. They make things happen and effect change.

Last year's Environmental Champion winners were PSS teacher Bree Reynolds, MINA board member Kathy Yuknavage, and local activist Captain Carl Brachear. The winners of the Environmental Steward award were elementary school student Adam Sablan and volunteer group Friends of the Mariana Islands.

To nominate an individual or group, submit a written nomination explaining why that person or group deserves recognition. You can make as many nominations as you like, but individuals

and groups can only be nominated for one award category. Nominations must include the award category the nominee is being considered for, a well written argument detailing the reasons why this nominee should be considered, and contact information for the nominee and for the person making the nomination.

Send nominations to Angelo Villagomez at angelovillagomez@gmail.com or mail them to PO BOX 505149; Saipan, MP 96950 or call the PTI sponsored Beautify CNMI volunteer line at 285-6462 for more information. The deadline for nominations is this Friday, March 7 2008. (*Beautify CNMI*)



IGIA MEETING

Rep. Donna Christensen of the U.S. Virgin Islands confers with Gov. Togiola Tulafono of American Samoa and Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo of Guam during the plenary session of the President's Interagency Group on Insular Areas held Feb. 26, 2008, in Washington D.C. The session was chaired by Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, and attended by, among others, Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho, CNMI Gov. Benigno Fitial, and Resident Representative Pedro A. Tenorio of the CNMI.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Yapese group raises \$145 at Shell's car wash fundraiser

Around 20 members of the CNMI Yapese Organization cleaned cars and raised \$145 during the Shell Suds for Funds car wash event held Feb. 23 at Shell's Highway Express service station.

The money will be used to purchase materials for the group's cultural performance at the upcoming Flame Tree Arts Festival, according to Gloria Guchol, CYO spokeswoman.

Guchol said they would have raised more had it not been for the bad weather. "We did not have many customers because it was raining. Nonetheless, it went well. It was good," she said.

Guchol said they pre-sold 28 car wash coupons at \$5 each days before the event, which enabled them to raise that much money despite the rain.

"We will be using the money to buy grass skirts and other things we would need for our culture dance at the Flame Tree Arts Festival," she said.

The Shell Suds for Funds car wash event is a fundraiser organized by Shell Marianas, Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia) Inc., and Glimpses Advertising for the benefit of non-profit organizations. Glimpses coordinates and documents the event for media purposes; Shell provides the cleaning water, soaps,



Members of the CNMI Yapese Organization clean a pickup truck during Shell's Suds for Funds car wash fundraiser held Feb. 23 at the Shell Highway Express service station on Middle Road in Gualo Rai.

sponges, buckets and tent; Coca-Cola provides the drinks.

"We'd like to thank Shell Marianas, Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia) Inc., and Glimpses for putting this together, and for providing us with the support that we needed," Guchol said.

Over the years, Shell Marianas, Coca-Cola and Glimpses Advertising have been holding the Shell Suds for Funds car wash event every third Saturday of the month benefiting approx-

imately 50 different civic and non-profit groups.

A regular Shell Suds for Funds event is being held every weekend at all Shell service stations as requested by non-profit organizations. Interested groups may coordinate with the station's manager, and bring their own refreshment and cleaning supplies except for car wash water, which is provided at the station.

Group members must be 18 years or older to participate in

the car wash.

A special Shell Suds for Funds car wash is scheduled every third or fourth Saturday of the month where a beneficiary is featured for publication and provided with cleaning supplies and refreshments by Shell Marianas and Coca-Cola, respectively.

Groups wanting to be the featured Shell Suds for Funds beneficiary may contact Jojo Dass at 234-6449 for details. (*Shell*)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

MARCH 4, 2002

Benavente named to '902' talks

Gov. Juan N. Babauta has appointed Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente to represent the Commonwealth in the upcoming "Section 902" discussions with the federal government. In a letter to U.S. President George W. Bush dated February 26, Babauta also urged Bush to appoint his own representative who will speak for the President during the negotiations.

A refreshing approach to the portrayal of Christian values

An experimental partnership between the Mount Carmel School Theatre Club and the Seventh Day Adventist Real Christian Theater gave life to a simple but stirring production depicting Christian values in the backdrop of contemporary times. Dubbed as "Point of Impact," the joint production staged at the Kagman Community Center over the weekend portrayed spiritual lessons that audiences were able to relate to.

The tourists are coming back

The Marianas Visitors Authority has recorded an increase in the number of Korean visitors to the islands, a development seen to alleviate the local industry's predicament due to the four-year-old economic slowdown. The number of Korean travelers to the CNMI rose 19 percent from 6,107 in January 2001 to 7,280 visitors in January 2002, according to a report released by the MVA.

MARCH 4, 2003

CNMI women shine in March

This March, it's the CNMI women's turn to shine through a month-long celebration that would pay homage to the sector's contributions, sacrifices, commitments and achievements. Acting Gov. Diego T. Benavente yesterday joined sector representatives led by the Office of Women's Affairs in endorsing the slate of March activities that are intended to highlight women's roles and issues.

AG declines to issue legal opinion on NMC policies

Attorney General Ramona V. Manglona declined Rep. Stanley S. Torres' request for a legal opinion relating to the Northern Marianas College's authority to hire and terminate employees. Manglona, in a letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, explained that her duty as counsel to the Governor and the Executive Branch agencies—including the NMC—precludes her from answering any questions pertaining to the propriety of NMC's actions.

Local TB rate 15 times higher than the US mainland

Tuberculosis cases in the Commonwealth persist as a health problem that even exceeds the U.S. mainland rate 15 times over, health officials confirmed yesterday. In the year that ended, Medical Director for the CNMI TB Control program Dr. David W. Lowrance noted 53 cases of acute TB in the CNMI. The 2002 figure, however, is a slight decline from the 59 cases reported in 2001. In 2000, the Department of Public Health recorded 75 TB cases.

MARCH 4, 2004

Congress asked to equip dialysis center

Citing a serious budget shortfall, the CNMI government is asking the U.S. Congress to provide at least \$1.1 million to equip the Commonwealth Health Center's expanded dialysis facility, which is currently under construction. In his testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Government Reform and Subcommittee on Wellness and Human Rights last Feb. 25, Public Health Secretary James U. Hofschneider said that the CNMI government budget could barely cover for the construction of the new building.

Veterans, biz tie up for WWII event

World War II veterans on Saipan yesterday called on businesses and other sectors to support the celebration of the 60th Battle of Saipan and Tinian this coming June, an event that would put the CNMI under international spotlight. A major convention among war veterans will also be held on Saipan this coming June in time for the celebrations.

Island Snapshots



AMIM CONFERENCE

Members of the Association of Mariana Islands Mayors, Vice Mayors and Elected Municipal Council gather for a photo with Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan during the group's 15th general assembly at the Seaside Hall of Saipan Grand Hotel Thursday. The group presented a plaque of appreciation to Tan Holdings Corp. for its many donations to the Guam and CNMI communities

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of the 15th Association of Mariana Islands Mayors, Vice Mayors and Elected Municipal Council gather for a general assembly at the Seaside Hall of Saipan Grand Hotel Thursday.



FAMILY FUN DAY

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs acting secretary Melvin Faisao delivers his brief remarks during the 2008 Family Fun Day at the Susupe Civic Center Saturday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



KRNM PRESENTATION

Carl Pogue, station manager of KRNM, delivers his presentation about the Northern Marianas public radio station 88.1 FM KRNM during last Tuesday's Rotary Club of Saipan meeting at the Giovanni's Restaurant of the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



KITE-MAKING WORKSHOP

Korea Kitefliers Association president Kitai Rhee, director Hakwon Kim and member Seung Jin Rhee teach parents and students on the proper way of making a kite during a one-hour-and-a-half session on kite-making at the Brilliant Star School on Navy Hill Friday.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs acting secretary Melvin Faisao, Division of Youth Services acting director Debra A. Inos and other officials gather for a photo with the 2008 exemplary parent leader nominees from different schools during the 2008 Family Fun Day at the Susupe Civic Center Saturday morning.



Children play with bubbles during the Division of Youth Services 2008 Family Fun Day at the Susupe Civic Center Saturday morning.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

CONVERSION SEMINAR

CNMI government employees listen to ASC Trust Corp. Michelle Diego during a meeting for the conversion of eligible government employees from the defined benefit plan to the defined contribution plan under the government's retirement program at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe Thursday afternoon.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

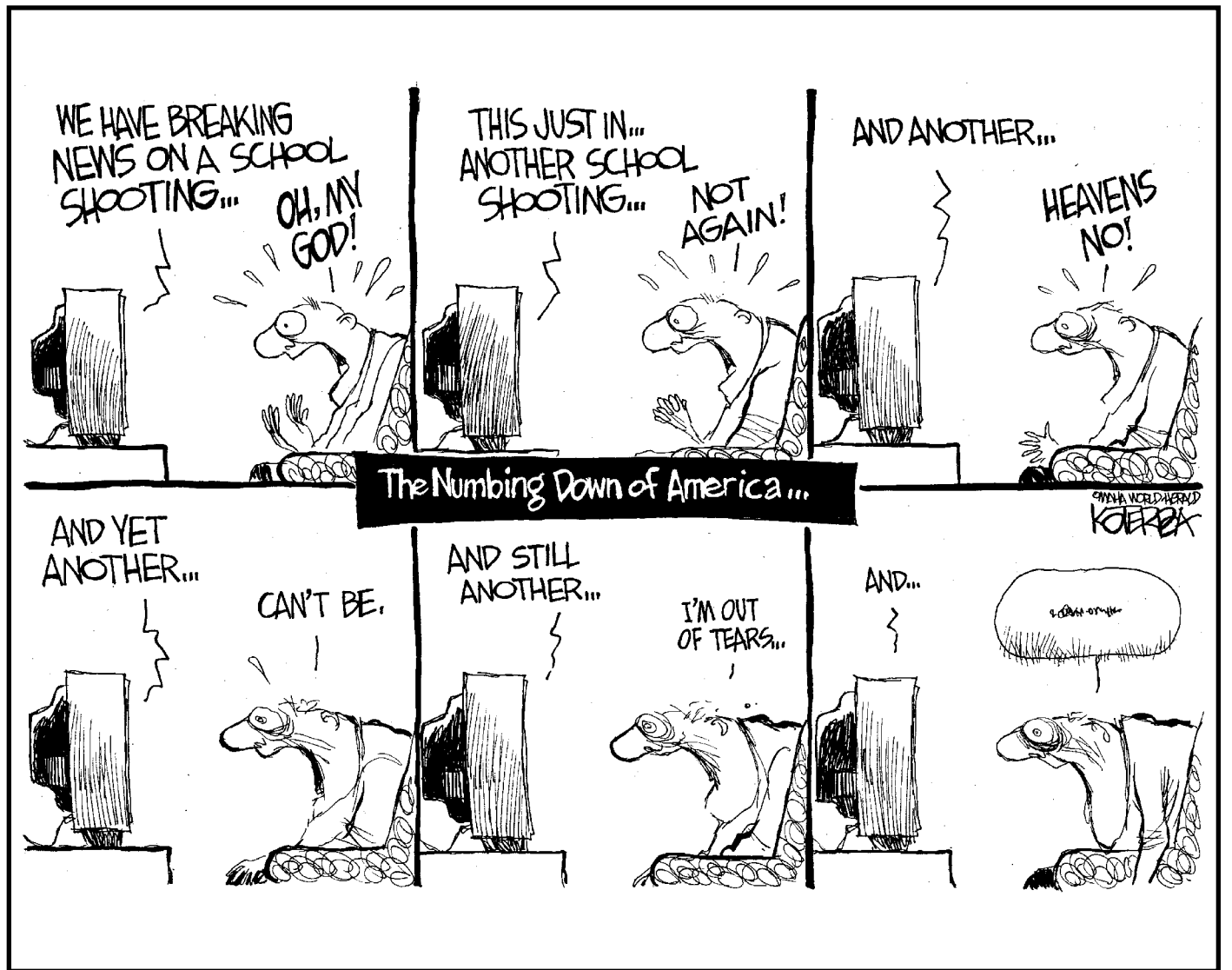
Russia's succession

Russians trooped to the polls Sunday for a presidential election whose result has been known since Dec. 10, when Vladimir Putin announced that Dmitri Medvedev would be his successor. The Kremlin has rounded up a collection of three losers for Mr. Medvedev to run against, including the head of the Communist Party and a buffoonish ultranationalist, while disqualifying the most serious opposition candidate, a liberal former prime minister. Yet the debate in the West over whether Russia is a democracy, or even headed in that direction, is over. No serious observer now disputes that Mr. Putin has used his eight years in office to construct an autocracy or that he intends to continue wielding power even after Mr. Medvedev takes office.

The debate in the West is about how to handle this increasingly belligerent police state. Mr. Putin himself scorns the former Russian policy of seeking integration with the West. In recent months he has withdrawn from a European arms control treaty and threatened to target Poland and Ukraine with nuclear missiles. Russia has bullied neighbors such as Georgia, supported Serbian ultranationalists in their rejection of Kosovo's independence, and tried to use its control over oil and gas pipelines to Europe as a political weapon. In the face of all this, both the United States and the European Union have largely stuck to their policies of the 1990s, which envisioned a deepening partnership with an emerging democracy. Russia is still a member of the Group of Eight, a club of rich democracies, long after it abandoned free politics. It enjoys a special relationship with NATO and a partnership agreement with the European Union. Some European governments are pressing for an E.U. decision to begin negotiations on an upgraded partnership accord. Neither President Bush nor most E.U. leaders have expressed disquiet about the manner in which the new president is being installed. On the contrary, some have seized on his rhetoric about promoting the rule of law and free media as a sign that Russia may yet veer back toward liberalism.

In fact, it's unlikely that Mr. Medvedev, a 42-year-old former law professor who has faithfully served Mr. Putin in various posts for more than a decade, will do more than take orders from his longtime boss, who will move to the post of prime minister—at least in the short term. Still, Western governments ought to use his ascension to set new terms for relations with Moscow. While Russia's cooperation should be sought in matters of common interest, such as stopping Iran's nuclear program, there is no reason why the European Union should offer an expanded strategic partnership to Moscow as long as it seeks to monopolize the continent's energy supplies, strip its neighbors of their sovereignty or nurture Serbian extremists. Nor should an autocracy be treated as an equal by the world's leading democracies. Mr. Bush openly wondered last week whether Mr. Medvedev or Mr. Putin would attend the G-8's next summit in July in Japan. A better question is why either of them should be invited.

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Good news

Soaring on the wind

The Marianas has a new and exciting event that has a chance to begin drawing sizeable numbers of people to our fair isles. Now on its third year, the Marianas Winds Kite Festival and International Food Fair is showing strong growth and major expansion. The list of sponsors for the Festival ran into three pages so support is becoming widespread although much more is needed as the Festival continues to grow in coming years. Among those donating to the event were MVA, Fiesta Resort and Spa, Hyatt Regency, PTI, Saipan Cell and a host of others. (A complete list would require more space than I have available – the Festival wishes to thank them all for making it all possible).

Starting out as a simple fundraiser for the local Montessori-based Brilliant Star School the Festival has rapidly moved in the direction its founders envisioned: it is becoming a major attraction on the annual tourist calendar. Future years hold the promise of a major draw similar to the Flame Tree Festival. What that venue does for arts and culture, the Kite Festival hopes to do for airborne soaring sports and culturally diverse food. It hopes to attract tourists, spectators and participants in ever increasing numbers.

This year saw several hundred tourists and residents enjoying the one-day event last Saturday (March 1) at the American Memorial Park. Next year's event will be bigger yet as kite flying teams and soaring associations from around Asia will be invited to participate.

The event was graced by the presence of a group from Asia with a tradition of kite flying that goes back millennia. The Korean Kite Flyers Association sent a group of five highly skilled professionals, including their president, to Saipan for the event. These talented folks came several days early and held classes and demonstrations of their art. Thanks to them a lot of children (of all ages) now know how to construct their own kites for fun and pleasure. The classes were fun and informative. The Korean Kite Flyers Association members wore traditional attire during the classes and during several flying demonstrations held in the days prior to the Festival. They want to return and we hope to see them back again next year.

Positive press was generated as a group of Chinese journalists came by and interviewed participants and guests alike. Hopefully next year, groups and teams from China, Japan, Korea and elsewhere can come out and compete. Model airplane gliding clubs and competition kite building and flying clubs abound all over Asia and we all hope they begin to view Saipan and the Northern Marianas as an annual gathering that needs to be attended.

This year saw competitive events in three major categories with eight total events. Next year promises an expanded range of competitions with contestants from several countries vying for prizes and

SOUR GRAPES

By BRUCE BATEMAN

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bruce A. Bateman writes *Sour Grapes* when the moon is full and the mood strikes. Stay tuned for each exciting episode. "Yes, he is opinionated." Email: bbateman@pticom.com; Blog: <http://saipanuvian.blogspot.com/>



trophies. Please be on the lookout for next year's event. Dates and times will be published well in advance. You might want to start working on that special kite now, so as to be ready for next year. You can come out just to see and be awed by the many types of kites, to eat the wide variety of cultural foods available or you can come out to participate in one or more of the competitions. Whichever activity pleases you, please plan to attend next year.

Fewer jobs bill may be quashed

The minimum wage issue is back in the news with Pete A. wisely waffling back to a more realistic one-more-bump-then-wait-a-couple-of-years stance, realizing he may want to return here someday. I'm making fun here but I agree with the wait-and-see part of his strategy. Thanks Mr. Tenorio.

Even US Sen. Bingaman, chairman of the reviewing committee, has logged on recently as opposing the hastily enacted wage hike foisted upon the CNMI and Samoa without regard to whether it is sustainable or not. He says there will be a halt on future wage hikes by "refining" the legislation. He also mentions that the halt will have to be enacted quickly to stave off the pending next round juggernaut of increases looming over the CNMI and American Samoa this coming May. Our thanks for noticing our plight.

The idea that governments can somehow legislate prosperity is nonsense. Politicians know this. If they could make a law that mandated everyone makes \$100 an hour and drives around in a Rolls Royce they would do it in a heartbeat. They can't, it doesn't work for a \$1,000/hour increase anymore than it does for a \$1 increase. Labor is a commodity and subject to the laws of supply and demand like any other.

Those new to the work force straight out of school and others with minimum skills and/or experience will find themselves priced right out of the market for a job. Any company can only afford to hire workers who are productive, meaning they make more for the company than they cost. If those companies are forced, by govern-

See GOOD on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor**A duty to care**

“On this planet we all want to live a good life in health, peace and prosperity.” (William Bamboo McCue, *Saipan Tribune*, Feb. 23). This letter is not meant to attack Mr. McCue who was fortunate to have been born with the right to a blue passport just as I have been. He said everyone has an opinion on the immigration issue and he alludes the same toward the federalization issue so I would like to express my opinions regarding the CNMI on both counts.

He is correct in saying U.S. laws do not just spring up overnight but during the drafting, debating, amending and ratifying they can become tainted by the lobbyist and lawmakers. When that happens, what are the laws then? Who do the laws serve more, the people or the lobbyists and lawmakers’ wallets? Take, for example, the government of the CNMI. Since I’ve been coming here and have seen it with my own eyes, I have found it to be lacking compared to other governments of the world, including the USA. Did the CNMI government not court Jack Abramoff who in turn courted ex-Rep. Tom Delay? Where are they now? What should that tell the government of the CNMI and her people and the rest of the world?

I understand why the immigration process is strict, as it should be, but the U.S. is a melting pot of many peoples and cultures, and it should not be impossible to become a citizen. So, why is it that the government of the CNMI wants to make it so? Mr. McCue relayed his cultural background, his work travels and even his marriage. I myself am an engineering officer in the merchant marines and the product of a white father and Vietnamese mother.

So I ask you, Mr. McCue, would your views still be the same if you had not been adopted into that family? Where would I be if the U.S. did not allow my mother into the U.S.? Where would you be if you had not been adopted? You are right that we should care for the welfare of the people of the world but people like you and me should have more care regarding the subject. We should want the process streamlined to get rid of the red tape and we should stop the oppression of any government that works toward stopping anyone from trying to immigrate to the U.S.

Yes, you married a Panamanian and adopted her son. Congratulations on making the lives of two people better, but why stop there? If you do not want to help and if you want to steer clear of the issues then maybe it’s best if you kept your opinions to yourself so they would not be misinterpreted and nobody’s feelings would get hurt and your words would not hurt the plight of lesser fortunate people. Remember Mr. McCue, the pen is mightier than the sword.

Yes, the immigration and non-federalization laws of the CNMI were negotiated with the U.S. and agreed upon, but the agreement was not meant to be permanent. It was meant to give the CNMI a chance and it has failed miserably. You mentioned the framers of the law would never have agreed to anything if they foresaw 40,000 contract workers trying to change the law. Is that not exactly what the forefathers of America did when they rebelled against the king of England? Were our forefathers, the framers of our Constitution

who gave us our inalienable rights, not immigrants who changed and circumvented the laws of their king, all for the betterment of the people? Do you think if they were alive today, the likes of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, etc. would stand for what is going on here today? What our government and the government of the CNMI needs is politicians in office who are not there for profit but are truly there for the betterment of their people in full instead of just the fortunate few.

You ask, is it fair that the USA and contract workers would strip control of the islands’ future from the islanders? I ask you this, how long does it take for the islanders to show they want a future? I tell you again, the independent government of the CNMI was never meant to be permanent. Do you think it’s fair that this government oppresses and suppresses contract workers? Would that kind of thing be allowed if it were happening on mainland soil? What I see here on this island is legal indentured servitude, which is illegal! The only thing stopping what goes on here with the contract workers from being called slavery is that they get paid a meager wage! I seem to recall a little something we studied in history class. It’s called the Emancipation Proclamation. Yes, that’s right, it was when President Abraham Lincoln freed all the slaves who, by the way, weren’t citizens of the U.S. either! This island thrives on contract workers and the government and a good percentage of the islanders thrive on government welfare paid by our tax dollars. You’ve heard of

welfare states; well, this is a welfare commonwealth! It is a parasite on our tax dollars and it reaps the benefits of the sweat and toil of contract workers! (I do not mean to say that all islanders are lazy and on welfare. I’m sure there are a great many of them that do work hard for what they have and I respect them for the hard work they do.)

This government does not want the minimum wage to increase, it is scared of federalization because they don’t want the contract workers to leave (does that mean the islands’ welfare recipients will actually have to start working? What a unconscionable notion, right?!?! Why would anyone want to work when you can get everything absolutely free?), and yet this government wants contract workers to leave every three years for six months before they can come back (why make it so hard?). Why is this government doing this? Could it be the government offices are held by people who care for nothing but themselves and their own pockets?

In regards to federalization, when was the last time you were in Guam? What is the CNMI lacking that Guam has? I’ll tell you the answer. It’s affluence and it’s progress and it’s a future for the island. If this government and its people would stop being scared then they would see the benefits of federalization. It means more financial support, better schools, better public works, more jobs, a brighter future for its youth, stability and growth, industry and tourism could be revitalized.

Sure the island will lose some contract workers but not all and what does the government care? Contract workers are supposed to leave every three years anyway, right?

Seeing what you’ve seen, are you not ashamed that our government has not stepped in to correct the wrongs that are taking place? Are the people of this island not considered U.S. citizens? Then why do they suppose they can have an autonomous government void of the checks and balances provided by the federal government? If they do not want to submit to the auspices of our federal laws, then we should revoke their citizenship and take back all of their blue passports. Every state in the union has their own government but they are still held in check by the federal government so what makes the CNMI so special?

In closing, it is of my opinion that federalization of the CNMI should take place and the immigration laws should be revamped and streamlined so as to not make it nearly impossible for anyone to become a citizen and most important, Mr. McCue, it is our duty and it should be our desire as citizens of the leader of the free world and as human beings to make all due diligence in stopping the oppression of all peoples, citizen and non-citizen alike. It is our duty to care Mr. McCue and not to express opinions that can be misconstrued as not caring.

W. Julian Rozier
Virginia Beach, VA

‘We must change, and fast’

It should not surprise anyone about the low rating of our government as shown by the study done on the CNMI’s financial state.

What is surprising, however, is how we continue to operate as if there are no problems. According to the study (Perfometer analysis funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior), each of us holds a long-term debt of \$3,714. This same study indicated that the CNMI is relying heavily on revenue from federal grants. This long-term debt should not be taken lightly as it needs to be paid mostly from taxes.

It is clear that we need to change. One that will have the biggest positive impact is to return the legislative budget to only salaries for each of the

lawmakers and the legislative bureau. The \$5,000 per month subsistence allowance is to be reduced and based on actual expenses supported by receipts not to exceed \$5,000.

What this will do is make several million dollars available to other agencies such as PSS, DPW, DCCA, etc., that in the first place it should have been given to. The Legislature will only be a law-making body in accordance with the Constitution.

Second, evaluate the pension/retirement plan. Everyone knows that the CNMI’s pension/retirement plan is one of the most generous plans in the country. However, the CNMI cannot sustain such a lavish plan. We simply do not have the resources. Re-

cently, the Fund had to take money from its investment portfolio to meet its obligations. This means that there are more payments being made than income. An investment opportunity taken out.

There are no options but to change and fast. All indications are that our economy is still going down and will most likely continue to deteriorate for the next two to three years.

One last thought: The CNMI depends a lot on federal grants for its revenues. Yet there are some who are speaking very loudly against federalization. Does this make sense?

Efrain F. Camacho
Navy Hill, Saipan

Name your sources

Please don’t report gossip from nameless sources on a subject as important as federalization. Mr. Jim Ross wrote a letter, given much prominence in a newspaper, that he has “heard” from the “offices” of certain senators that the federalization bill will pass soon.

Did Mr. Ross talk personally to any of the senators he named? No, of course he didn’t. Did he talk to the senator’s chief of staff who manages the senator’s position on policy matters? No, of course he didn’t. No chief of staff is going to spend time talking to the likes of Mr. Ross. Did he talk to the senator’s chief legal counsel who manages the senator’s position on legal matters? No, of course he didn’t.

Here’s what we have. Headlines made by someone who called up a senator’s office and most probably spoke to a receptionist who is paid to assure the caller that the senator will help out on whatever cause the caller is calling about—just to get the caller off the phone as quickly as possible and get on to the next caller.

When you write, Mr. Ross (and all of the rest of you pro-federalization people who don’t like to reveal your “sources”), please tell us exactly whom you talked to, so we can call and check to see if you did what you said you did and if the person on the other end said what you say they said. Otherwise, your stuff is just useless gossip and propaganda for your side of this debate. Let’s call it what it is.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
Taotao Tano

GOOD

From Page 10

ment, to pay a non profitable wage they will simply not hire, or will replace a worker with a machine as we see happening all around the world.

Increasing the minimum wage is an old and tired trick usually trundled out at election time. It destroys far more people than it helps but those destroyed, the bottom tier of employees, are not very vocal and often don’t vote, so from the politician’s standpoint it

is worth sending them down the river to get the votes from the non-affected blocks. So if you “feel good” about your support for the “downtrodden masses” suffering under low wages, think again. You are supporting their demise in many cases.

Counting beans

I couldn’t help noticing that while the CNMI government scored a rather poor 2.4 on the recently completed ‘Perfometer’ scale of economic health that we are doing about twice as good as our neighbor to the south, Guam,

who scored a 1.32. Our score showed a slight uptick from last year so all is not lost. Those of you who claim Guam’s already extant U.S. immigration system and universal fee simple land alienation is making it all better might want to take another look. The study was done by Crawford and Associates and was paid for by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

I’ll respect you in the morning

I get a kick out of politicians who go all out to get “celebrity” endorsements from the acting community. I

wonder if they are the only ones who don’t see that an actor’s job is to be a professional liar. That is what pretending to be a character one is not is. Only a few can do it really well. Only a few can do it convincingly. Actors bring us wonderful relief from reality and sometimes fantastic insights into the real world via their roles on stage and in films so we should be grateful, even laudatory, in our praise of them. On the other hand, taking that actor’s word on the sterling character of some politician may not be the most trusted source you can find on the

matter. It might even be said that an actor’s endorsement should be taken with a grain of schmaltz.

So when Jack Nicholson tells me “he’s home” or that he wants his egg salad sandwich on toast-hold the egg salad, I know I am probably in for a good time. When he tells me I should vote for Mrs. Clinton, I’m out looking for some goose fat to poke in my ears.






Quote of the week: A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a man. Kites rise against, not with, the wind.

—John Neal (1793 – 1876)

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲82° ▼75°	▲82° ▼75°	▲82° ▼76°	▲81° ▼75°	▲82° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲85 ▼75
Palau	Cloudy	▲87 ▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲87 ▼76
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	▲89 ▼77
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲85 ▼75

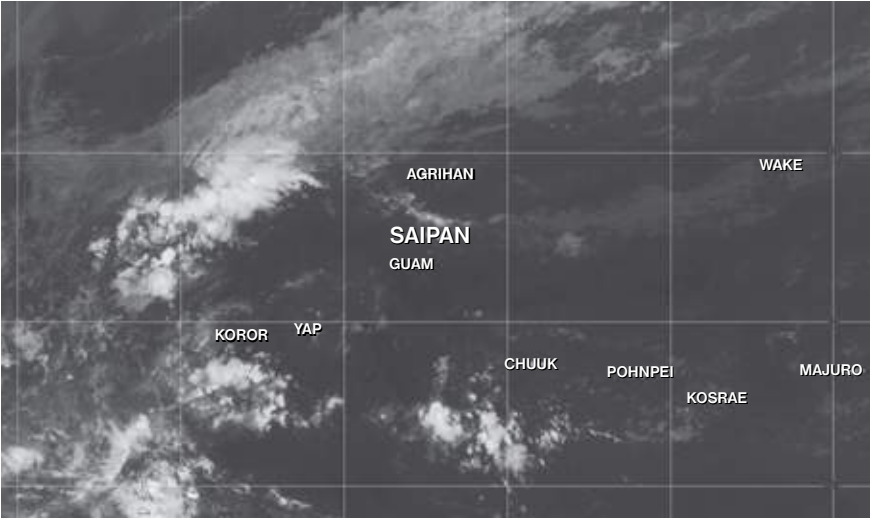
Around The Globe

Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲67 ▼61
Beijing	Sunny	▲50 ▼34
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲70 ▼59
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲78 ▼67
London	Cloudy	▲45 ▼37
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲72 ▼52
Manila	Showers	▲87 ▼72
Melbourne	Cloudy	▲76 ▼59
Miami	Mostly Cloudy	▲85 ▼70
New York	Rain	▲55 ▼44
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲40 ▼30
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲41 ▼29
Pusan	Cloudy	▲45 ▼28
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲57 ▼38
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲53 ▼33
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲63 ▼47
Seoul	Rain/Snow	▲45 ▼21
Tokyo	Showers	▲50 ▼38
Washington, DC	Showers	▲63 ▼47

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
6:41AM Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
11:51AM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
04:36PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line curves eastward from 20N140E to the north of Saipan at 16N146E to 15N154E to south of Wake Island at 18N167E to end at 20N170E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 100 miles north of the shear line. A stationary front extends northeastward from 15N130E to near the northernmost cnmi at 20N145E to 22N155E, then continues as a cold front to beyond 25N at 176E west of 154E. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are occurring along and northwest of the front to beyond 25N. A few thunderstorms have broken out along the front to the west of 136E east of 154E. Cloudiness and scattered showers exist along and up to 50 miles north of the cold front. A trade-wind disturbance is producing scattered showers near Koror between 3N and 8N from 130E to 136E. A weak surface trough extends northward from 1N148E to 8N149E. Trade-wind convergence in the vicinity of the trough is triggering scattered showers in Yap and Chuuk States in an area bounded by a line from 4N144E to 8N149E to 3N154E back to 2N149E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:32AM	6:25PM
Wednesday	6:32AM	6:26PM
Thursday	6:31AM	6:26PM
Friday	6:30AM	6:26PM
Saturday	6:30AM	6:26PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	03:45AM	03:14PM
Wednesday	04:31AM	04:10PM
Thursday	05:14AM	05:05PM
Friday	05:55AM	06:01PM
Saturday	06:35AM	06:56PM

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 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS**
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS**
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI**
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE**
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN**
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
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To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 15, 2008

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Saipan-Rota CO 9313 8:30am 9:05am 3,4,7	Rota-Saipan CO 9598 11:10am 11:45am 1,2,6
Saipan-Guam CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily CO9597 8:30am 9:20am 1,2,5,6 CO9313 8:30am 10:00am 3,4,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm Daily CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	Guam-Saipan CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am Daily CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9598 10:15am 11:45am 1,2,6 via Rota CO9600 10:45am 11:35am 3,4,5,7 CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
Saipan-Narita NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm Daily via Nagoya NW 075 4:50pm 7:30pm Daily	Narita-Saipan NW 076 10:35am 3:05pm Daily NW 077 6:15pm 1:10am+1 Daily via Nagoya
Saipan-Osaka NW 083 4:30pm 7:25pm Daily	Osaka-Saipan NW 084 10:40am 3:10pm Daily
Saipan-Nagoya NW 078 8:25am 11:05am Daily	Nagoya-Saipan NW 077 8:45pm 1:10am+1 Daily
Saipan-Manila CO 895 4:45pm 6:35pm 6 CO 895 6:45pm 8:35pm 3	Manila-Saipan CO 890 9:15am 2:55pm 6 CO 890 11:45am 5:35pm 3
Saipan-Seoul OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 606 3:30pm 7:00pm 2,4,6,7	Seoul-Saipan OZ 605 9:00am 2:30pm 2,4,6,7 OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
Saipan-Busan OZ 608 4:00am 7:35am 1,4,5,7	Busan-Saipan OZ 607 9:30pm 2:50am+1 3,4,6,7
Saipan-Guanzhou CZ 3008 5:00am 8:00am 2,6	Guanzhou-Saipan CZ 3007 8:00pm 4:00am+1 1,5
Saipan-Shanghai MU 590 4:20am 7:00am 2,6	Shanghai-Saipan MU 589 8:05pm 3:00am+1 1,5
Guam-Manila CO 891 6:00am 10:30am 3 via Yap and Koror CO 893 6:30am 8:05am 6 CO 893 8:25am 10:00am 2,7 CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 5 via Koror CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:45am 1,2,4,6,7	Manila-Guam CO 894 11:20am 4:55pm 2,7 CO 894 7:45pm 1:20am+1 6 CO 892 9:45pm 5:25am+1 3 via Koror CO 892 9:45pm 6:30am+1 3 via Koror and Yap CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 5 via Koror CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily PR 110 10:15pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Guam-Hongkong CO 909 7:45pm 10:40pm 1,5	Hongkong-Guam CO 910 11:40pm 6:20am+1 1,5
Guam-Rota CO 9598 10:15am 10:45am 1,2,6	Rota-Guam CO 9313 9:30am 10:00am 3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily



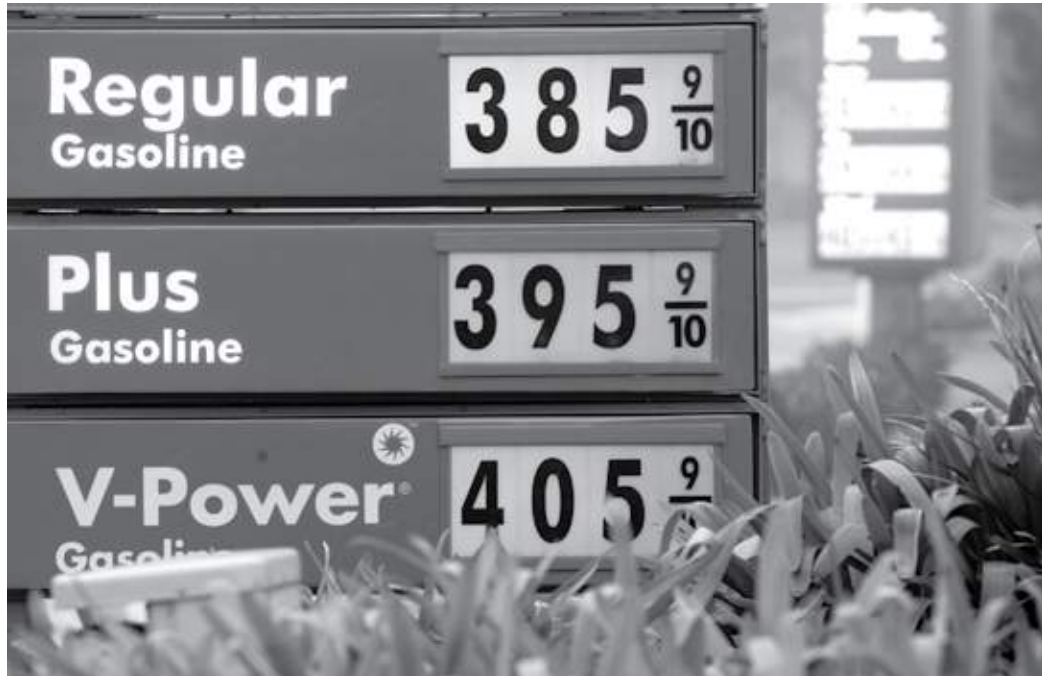
NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

Libya: OPEC to keep production unchanged



High gas prices are posted at a Shell gas station in Menlo Park, Calif., Friday, Feb. 29, 2008. Oil futures retreated from a new overnight record above \$103 as the dollar gained strength and Turkish forces withdrew from northern Iraq, removing two of the reasons underpinning crude's dramatic 19 percent rise from earlier this month. Gasoline and diesel prices, meanwhile, continued to soar. Gas prices rose 0.3 cent overnight to a national average of \$3.164 a gallon, creeping closer to last May's record of \$3.227 a gallon, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service.

Q and A

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Excerpts from a recent Washington Post online reader chat with personal finance writer Nancy Trejos and Marty Tashman, a counselor based in Somerset, N.J., who has handled many couples who feud over money.

Q: Why do you think talking about money between couples is difficult? Do we as humans attach our identity to our income and just get flustered?

A (Tashman): Money is symbolic of a lot of other issues, like security, a sense of self worth. So the idea here is to identify what the real issues are and not get lost in the dollars answer.

Q: Is there any sane way to deal with the emotional issues a prenup brings?

A (Tashman): This is a thorny question. Start with why the person is concerned. Next, realize that often they are concerned about a sense of security. Also ask yourself why is this issue important to you. There is no perfect answer. ... The important thing here is that the conversation is respectful and gives the other person the benefit of the doubt.

Q: How does a spouse convince the other to cut back on cable, golf and other outings to pay down debt?

A (Trejos): All the financial planners and counselors I talked to said ... the first thing to do is to keep track of how much is being spent on such activities, then do the math. If your spouse doesn't want to do that sort of analysis, perhaps you can do it. Tally everything, then show him how much of a dent golf and other luxuries are making in your finances. ... But do it in a respectful manner. Don't accuse. Don't raise your voice. Be calm. And be willing to compromise. Maybe you can convince him to play golf once a month instead of every weekend. If you are willing to bend a little, perhaps he will meet you halfway.

Q: What are some top communication "habits" regarding financial matters that have helped your clients reach resolution?

A (Tashman): Here are four habits that are

very important. 1) Respect the other person's point of view. 2) Discuss, don't blame. 3) Look for compromise at every opportunity. 4) Take a break if things are getting too heated.

Q: Would you share some of your clients' success stories?

A (Tashman): (One) husband really wanted to go on a warm-weather vacation and the wife wanted to do cold-weather sports. They negotiated with each other and promised that first they would go to a warm-weather vacation and then they would go for winter sports. They would spend more money on the second vacation, because the other person was being patient. ... The success here is that they were able to talk the issue through, with respect, and to find a creative compromise, giving each a feeling of empowerment.

Q: Last January I got a full-time job while still a full-time college student. Upon graduation, I remained at my job, never asking my parents for money for all of 2007 and having my own health benefits. My parents, who assured me they would pay for college, now cannot. I pay a hefty amount each month (\$1,600) and make ends meet on my own. When I sat down to file my tax returns, I called my mom just to make sure I was considered "independent" and that she would not file me as a dependent. ... She has refused, and a rift has been created. She claims this is her last year to file me as a dependent, and she's going to. I've told her ... I'll be keeping my independent status. I don't know who is financially in the right here.

A (Trejos): If you've just graduated from college, you're probably in your early 20s. You are an adult. You have your own job. It sounds like you don't live with your parents, so I assume you're paying for your own housing. And now it sounds like you're going to end up paying for your college education. I'm not a tax expert, but I don't see how your parents can claim you as a dependent. You are at an age and a financial point in your life where you need to stand up for yourself and make your own financial decisions. You're not a kid anymore. Think about getting an accountant.

VIENNA (AP)—The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is set to hold current production levels unchanged at a meeting this week as it continues to gauge the state of the global economy, the head of Libya's oil industry said Sunday.

"It seems as though things are going to be as is," said Shokri Ghanem, head of Libyan oil policy and Chief Executive of Libya's National Oil Co.

Ghanem also said OPEC will discuss the ongoing dispute between Venezuela and oil giant Exxon Mobil Corp., saying it was possible there could be an official pronouncement from

the cartel on the issue.

"We will discuss it," he told reporters in the Austrian capital.

Exxon and Petroleos de Venezuela, or PdVSA, are entangled in a legal dispute over President Hugo Chavez's move to nationalize a multibillion dollar oil project in the Orinoco basin last summer, which prompted the Irving, Texas, oil giant to leave the country.

As it pursues twin arbitration cases internationally, Exxon has secured court orders freezing more than \$12 billion in PdVSA assets worldwide to ensure payment, a move Chavez calls a political affront. Venezuela has

responded by cutting off spot market oil sales to Exxon.

Oil ministers from the 13-member oil-producer group, which supplies four out of 10 barrels of world oil consumption, meet March 5 to discuss output policy against the contrasting factors of scorching record high prices and weakening demand.

OPEC ministers have made clear in recent days that they aren't likely to respond to bullish prices by boosting supplies.

"We're going to see...about the economic performance" but so far it seems there will be no change, Ghanem said.

Pols: Govt here to help, not bail out

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Bailout is a dirty word in the nation's capital. Lately, efforts by both Democrats and Republicans to clean up the housing mess are getting sullied with the b-word.

An inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars is what President Bush and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson call some plans in Congress to aid homeowners stung by the mortgage market mess. For their part, Democrats say the Bush administration is more interested in bailing out Wall Street than Main Street.

But despite the toxic reputation of bailouts, more and more lifelines keep getting tossed - including one administration plan dubbed "Project Lifeline."

With the housing market wheezing and presidential candidates seizing on the crisis, politicians and government officials will likely toss out more proposals, rescue plans and initiatives. Whatever these plans are called, both Democrats and Republicans are being careful to couch their proposals as an effort to aid homeowners—and not mortgage lenders—amid an ever-widening economic problem, though it's nearly impossible to aid one without helping the other.

"Anything that can be described as a bailout is going to be dead-on-arrival, so how these proposals are framed is critical to whether or not they even have

a chance at enactment," said Jaret Seiberg, a financial services policy analyst with Stanford Group. "It has to be framed as a short-term rescue for the housing market and the economy and not as a way to help individual lenders or investors."

Supporters of a dramatic government response note that there's plenty of precedent. Congress approved an airline industry bailout after the 2001 terrorist attacks, established the Resolution Trust Corp. to mop up after the savings and loan crisis and created the Home Owners' Loan Corp. in 1933 to help borrowers refinance troubled home loans during the Great Depression.

Weak dollar hurts smaller European firms

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP)—Hugh Quinn has seen the ever-weakening dollar shatter his ability to sell hand-cut Irish lead crystal to American customers.

Ingolf Haas says profit at his family-run cuckoo clock business in Germany has dropped at least 10 percent since the U.S. currency's latest decline began. Roberto Anselmi now sells more of his Italian white wine to Canada than to the United States.

Times are tough for small and artisanal businesses across Europe that traditionally target Americans as their No. 1 buyers, since the swooning dollar shrinks their revenues from U.S. sales but their costs remain in expensive euros.

The problem is compounded by economic worries that may make Americans think twice about buying the products they coveted and consumed in more prosperous days.

With the euro topping \$1.52 this week—up from \$1.18 when it was introduced in 1999, and from 82 cents at its lowest in 2000—economists say all euro-denominated exporters have reason to be worried. But tourism-



Conny Haas, a clockmaker in Schonach, southern Germany, paints a clock face on Friday Feb. 29, 2008.

oriented producers of luxury goods are hurting the most.

These niche manufacturers are often too small to engage in the complex, risky hedging

that protects larger companies from shifts in the value of different currencies.

"They can get into trouble if they have their eggs in one basket, particularly these days if it's an American basket," said Alan McQuaid, chief economist of Bloxham Stockbrokers in Dublin. "They have to broaden their horizons."

Irish crystal offers a glittering example. Five years ago, both Quinn's employer, Galway Irish Crystal Ltd. in western Ireland, and its much bigger Irish competitor Waterford, relied on Americans for about half of their sales.

Both have now been hampered by the dollar's decline - but Waterford has maintained its U.S. sales volumes by slashing Irish production and shifting output away from the euro zone to cheaper locations like Eastern Europe and Brazil.

EXCHANGE RATES	
DOLLAR	PESO
\$1.00	= P40.56

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

2 arraigned in NY abandoned baby case

NEW YORK (AP) -- A cabdriver accused of making up a story about a baby being abandoned in his taxi faces charges in the abandonment of the girl that could earn him a year in jail, officials said Sunday. The 44-year-old driver, Klever Sailema, was initially praised as a Good Samaritan after he told police an unknown man left the 6-month-old child in his livery cab. He was arraigned late Saturday on charges of falsely reporting an incident and criminal facilitation, said Kevin Ryan, spokesman for Queens prosecutor Richard Brown. Sailema's girlfriend, 21-year-old Maria Siavichay, was arraigned on a charge of criminal facilitation. Investigators say she is the child's aunt. Sailema and Siavichay were released without bail and ordered to Queens Criminal Court on April 7. They each face up to a year in jail if convicted, Ryan said.

2 ill people evacuated from cruise ship

MIAMI (AP) -- The Coast Guard in Miami says it has plucked two ailing passengers from a cruise ship that was south of Cuba. Coast Guard officials say the 88-year-old man and 80-year-old woman were airlifted from the Holland America cruise ship Westerdam when the ship was about 80 miles south of the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay. Officials say a Coast Guard helicopter crew hoisted the two passengers late Friday. The man was taken to the Guantanamo Bay hospital and the woman was flown to a hospital in Miami.

A 3rd dies after Fla. plane collision

TITUSVILLE, Fla. (AP) -- A third person has died after a fiery plane collision at a Florida airfield, the National Transportation Safety Board said Sunday. A fourth person remains in critical condition, NTSB spokesman Peter Knudson said. A chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association was holding a pancake breakfast when the crash occurred Saturday. A witness provided a video to investigators, and NTSB officials will review it Monday, Knudson said.

San Francisco getting \$2M for oil spill

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) -- Agents for the owner of a cargo ship that dumped oil into San Francisco Bay have agreed to pay \$2 million to the city of San Francisco. City Attorney Dennis Herrera says the agreement, announced Sunday, was an "initial payment" to cover some cleanup costs after the November crash, not a final settlement. Thousands of birds died, beaches closed and the crabbing season was delayed after the 900-foot Cosco Busan sideswiped the Bay Bridge. The crash cut a gash in the hull, and 54,000 gallons of oil were spilled. The agreement was reached with Hudson Marine Management Services of Pennsauken, N.J., acting on behalf of the ship's Hong Kong-based owner, Regal Stone Ltd.

AP says 13,000 abuse claims in juvie centers

COLUMBIA, Miss. (AP) -- The Columbia Training School—pleasant on the outside, austere on the inside—has been home to 37 of the most troubled young women in Mississippi.

If some of those girls and their advocates are to be believed, it is also a cruel and frightening place.

The school has been sued twice in the past four years. One suit brought by the U.S. Justice Department, which the state settled in 2005, claimed detainees were thrown naked in to cells and forced to eat their own vomit. The second one, brought by eight girls last year, said they were subjected to "horrendous physical and sexual abuse." Several of the detainees said they were shackled for 12 hours a day.

These are harsh and disturbing charges—and, in the end, they were among the reasons why state officials announced in February that they will close Columbia. But they aren't uncommon.

Across the country, in state after state, child advocates have explored the conditions under which

young offenders are housed—conditions that include sexual and physical abuse and even deaths in restraints. The U.S. Justice Department has filed lawsuits against facilities in 11 states for supervision that is either abusive or harmfully lax and shoddy.

Still, a lack of oversight and nationally accepted standards of tracking abuse make it difficult to know exactly how many youngsters have been assaulted or neglected.

The Associated Press contacted each state agency that oversees juvenile correction centers and asked for information on the number of deaths as well as the number of allegations and confirmed cases of physical, sexual and emotional abuse by staff members since Jan. 1, 2004.

According to the survey, more than 13,000 claims of abuse were identified in juvenile correction centers around the country from 2004 through 2007—a remarkable total, given that the total population of detainees was about 46,000 at the time the states were surveyed in 2007.

Attack on family shocks Texas community

EMORY, Texas (AP) -- Angry that her parents demanded she break up with her boyfriend, a teenage girl helped kill her mother and two brothers during a grisly weekend ambush on the family's rural, wooded home, authorities said Sunday.

The 16-year-old girl joined her boyfriend and two others in shooting and stabbing members of the Caffey family in their bedrooms before setting the house on fire, authorities said, confirming what most in this farming town had known since the pre-dawn attack Saturday.

The lone survivor was Terry Caffey, the father. He was shot five times—including twice in the back—before he dragged his bloodied body through the woods in search of help. He awaited surgery Sunday to remove the bullets, Rains County Sheriff David Traylor said.

Killed were Penny Caffey, 37, and sons Tyler, 8, and Mathew, 13.

"We feel confident that the motive was the fact that the juvenile daughter and one of the individuals in custody were dating and that the parents were attempting



Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm investigators from Rains and Smith Counties, Texas shovel and pick through charred remains of a rural Alba home on Saturday evening, March 1, 2008.

to break the relationship up," Traylor said, "which led to the crime that was committed."

The girl, who was not identified because of her age, was arraigned Sunday on three counts of

capital murder and being held on \$1.5 million bond. Charlie James Wilkinson, the girl's 19-year-old boyfriend, and two others were arraigned on the same charges.

Charles Allen Waid, 20, and

Bobbi Gale Johnson, 18, were the others charged with three counts each of capital murder. All were being held in Rains County jail on \$1.5 million bond. Traylor said he didn't know whether any suspects

Obama slams Clinton on homestretch

WESTERVILLE, Ohio (AP) -- Democrat Barack Obama worked to fend off an intensified attack on his foreign policy credentials from rival Hillary Rodham Clinton on Sunday as their paths crossed two days ahead of a potentially race-ending showdown in Ohio and Texas.

"What precise foreign-policy experience is she claiming that makes her qualified to answer that telephone call at 3 a.m. in the morning?" Obama asked of the former first lady at a town-hall meeting. It was a reference to dueling television ads over who would exercise superior judgment in responding to a na-

tional emergency in the middle of the night.

■■■

WESTERVILLE, Ohio (AP) -- Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton argued Sunday that her campaign is "about solutions," not feelings, as she swept through Ohio on an intense push two days before the state's presidential primary.

She told more than 2,000 cheering backers that she wants to solve the economic troubles facing the industrial Midwest.

"For some people this election is about how you feel, it's about speeches," Clinton said.

"Well, that's not what it's about for me. It's about solutions."

The former first lady opened an Ohio campaign marathon, sweeping across the state on a series of appearances lasting until the wee hours of Monday. Her first stop, in suburban Columbus, was aimed at firing up canvassers who were manning phone banks and knocking doors for her.

■■■

The Illinois senator also sought to ease lingering Internet-fed concerns about his religion, in particular whether he was a closet Muslim.

"I am a devout Christian. I have been a member of the same church for 20 years. I pray to Jesus every night," he declared at an earlier appearance in the rural southern Ohio town of Nelsonville. He said he wanted to halt "confusion that has been deliberately perpetrated."

Unlike Clinton, who has been barnstorming Ohio, Obama had only two events in the state on Sunday and was spending the night in hometown Chicago. He heads to Texas on Monday for a final day of campaigning before awaiting returns on Tuesday in San Antonio.

Suburban Utah home searched for ricin

RIVERTON, Utah (AP) -- FBI agents wearing protective suits searched Sunday for the deadly poison ricin at a suburban home where a man possibly sickened by the deadly poison had once lived.

Authorities believed they had found all of the ricin in several vials recovered Thursday from a Las Vegas motel where Roger Von Bergendorff had been staying, but they wanted to also check the home in Riverton, outside Salt Lake City.

"We are taking all the precautions necessary to ensure public safety," FBI agent Timothy Fuhrman said at a news conference Sunday.

Nearby homes were evacuated as FBI agents, covered from head to toe in full hazardous-material protection suits, meticulously searched the home belonging to Von Bergendorff's cousin Thomas Tholen.

Von Bergendorff had been staying in the motel room where the ricin was found and has been hospitalized since Feb. 14. Von Bergendorff has been unconscious, so police and the FBI have not been able to question him about the ricin found in his room.

Health officials are still trying to confirm whether Von Bergendorff's respiratory ailment stemmed from ricin exposure.

The FBI got a search warrant for Tholen's home, where Von Bergendorff once lived. The search began Sunday morning and continued into the afternoon.

Fuhrman said it would be a long process because agents were potentially dealing with such a toxic substance. He would not say whether the FBI suspected that Von Bergendorff had manufactured or stored ricin in the home or the rented storage units.

Residents from three surrounding homes were allowed to return by Sunday afternoon, but the Tholen house was still closed off late in the day as the search continued. Authorities planned to decide soon whether to conclude the search Sunday night.

Las Vegas police said that firearms, an "anarchist-type textbook" and castor beans, from which ricin is made, were found in the room where the poison was discovered. The book was tabbed at a spot containing information about ricin.



A person dressed in a HAZMAT outfit works outside a home Sunday, March 2, 2008, in Riverton, Utah.

Asia

Suicide bomber kills 40 in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—A bomber blew himself up Sunday among thousands of tribal members discussing resistance to al-Qaida and the Taliban, killing 40 people in the third suicide attack in as many days in northwestern Pakistan.

The rash of suicide bombings show President Pervez Musharraf's weakening control of the region despite the deployment of thousands of troops to crush Islamic militants.

Five tribes were meeting to finalize a resolution that would punish anyone who shelters or helps Islamic militants, includ-

ing al-Qaida and Taliban fighters, Interior Ministry spokesman Javed Iqbal Cheema said.

A young man walked up to a group of elders and detonated his explosives, said Alam Khan, a tribesman at the meeting in Darra Adam Khel, a town in North West Frontier Province about 25 miles south of the provincial capital, Peshawar.

"It was a huge explosion and left body parts and blood scattered on the ground," said Ramin Khan, another participant whose left leg and face were injured. He and others hurt in the attack were brought to a hospital in Peshawar.

Dr. Hamid Afridy, the area's chief medical officer, said he counted 40 bodies and more than 100 injured were sent to the hospital. He said many were in critical condition and feared the death toll could rise.

Television footage showed blood, shoes and caps littering the bombing site - a tree-lined ground surrounded by wheat fields and only yards away from brick homes.

Musharraf called the bombing an attempt to sabotage tribal efforts to rid the region of militant influence and reiterated the government's "resolve and commitment" in the fight



A local resident walks at the site with blood after a suicide bombing in Adam Khel, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Peshawar, Pakistan, Sunday, March 2, 2008.

against terrorism.

The attack came two days after a suicide bomber struck at the funeral of a slain police officer in Mingora town in Swat Valley, killing more than 40 people and injuring at least 60. On Saturday, another suicide bombing in nearby Bajur killed one person and wounded 19 others, mostly security personnel.

Friday's bombing was the bloodiest attack in the Swat Valley since militant followers of a pro-Taliban cleric, Maulana Fazlullah, grabbed control of large parts of the scenic corner of Pakistan's restive northwest.

The army says it has retaken most of Swat since Musharraf sent thousands of troops in November, but attacks persist and Fazlullah remains at large.

Musharraf has U.S. backing for his support in battling Taliban and al-Qaida militants, many of whom operate in rugged parts of Pakistan near the Afghan border.

But the Pakistani president has faced an uncertain political future since his allies were soundly defeated in parliamentary elections last month.

China mulls change to one-child policy

BEIJING (AP)—China may consider changing its one-child policy because it has helped slow population growth over the last three decades, a Chinese official said Sunday.

The policy, launched in the 1970s, has produced "very good results," said Wu Jianmin spokesman for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory body to parliament.

There would be an estimated 400 million more people in China without it, Wu said.

"The one-child policy was the only choice we had given the conditions when we initiated the policy," Wu told reporters at a news conference the day before the CPPCC convened for its annual session. However, he added, "when designing a policy we

need to take into consideration the reality."

"So as things develop, there might be some changes to the policy and relevant departments are considering this," Wu said without giving a timeline or details on which departments would be involved.

Wu's comments echo a position China's communist government has been thinking about for some time. On Thursday, a senior family planning official said changes were being considered but that family planning policies would not be scrapped altogether.

Under the current mandate, Beijing limits most urban couples to one child and rural couples to two to conserve scarce resources. Critics say the policy has led to forced

abortions, sterilizations and a dangerously imbalanced sex ratio due to a traditional preference for male heirs that has prompted countless families to abort female fetuses.

There are also concerns about China's aging population, with those aged 60 or older expected to top 200 million by 2015 and 280 million by 2025, according to the government.

The CPPCC includes representatives of China's main business, religious and other non-communist groups. The session will run through March 14.

Wu said the hot topics this session include macroeconomic controls, government restructuring, employment rates, consumer price stability, climate change, and reform of the financial, educational and health care systems.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Thailand votes for senators

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Thais went to the polls Sunday to vote in the country's first elections for the upper house of Parliament since a 2006 military coup ousted elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The 76 members of the Senate to be elected, one from each of the country's provinces, will join 74 others already appointed by a committee made up of judges, the Election Commission and the heads of various independent agencies. Unofficial results are expected to be announced late Sunday. The vote was largely peaceful, but a bomb blast near a polling station in a Muslim-majority province in Thailand's restive south injured three soldiers.

US nuclear envoy leaves China

BEIJING (AP)—The top American negotiator for the stalled six-nation talks on North Korean disarmament left Beijing on Sunday without meet-

ing officials from Pyongyang as hoped, the U.S. Embassy said. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill met his Chinese counterpart Wu Dawei on Saturday as part of efforts to jump-start the disarmament process. A U.S. State Department official said earlier that Hill might also meet with his North Korean counterpart Kim Kye Gwan in Beijing, but the U.S. Embassy here said Sunday that no such meeting took place.

South Korea, US begin military drills

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea warned it would take steps to safeguard the communist country as South Korea and the United States kicked off annual joint military exercises Sunday. North Korea routinely condemns the war games, calling them a preparation for an invasion. The U.S. and South Korea say the exercises are purely defensive. "Dialogue and confrontation, peace and war can never go together," North Korea's Committee for the Peace-

ful Reunification of the Fatherland said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. "We will sternly take self-defensive steps to defend (the) peace and stability of the Korean peninsula," it said. The statement did not say what it meant by self-defensive steps.

US to train Pakistan military officers

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—U.S. trainers will travel to Pakistan this year to teach military officials counterinsurgency techniques to aid soldiers along the Afghan border in the fight against al-Qaida and Taliban militants, U.S. officials said Sunday. The training will also leave the Pakistani border force better able to cooperate with U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, a U.S. military official said. Twenty-two U.S. trainers will arrive in "drips and drabs" this year and could be in place as soon as June or as late as October, the military official said on condition he not be identified because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Cory confident GMA will be forced out

By **JIM GOMEZ**
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A former Philippine leader and democracy icon said Sunday she expected public protests over a corruption scandal to eventually force current President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to step down.

But former President Corazon Aquino told more than 1,000 students, nuns and priests, who gathered to hear her speak after a Mass held at a Roman Catholic university in Manila, that apathy among Filipinos could stall efforts to remove the president.

"We haven't fully awakened our countrymen, who seem to refuse to be roused from their slumber," Aquino said.

Aquino, who helped lead the country's 1986 "people power" revolt that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos, said she was not disheartened.

"If we were able to bring down a dictator to his knees, maybe it's easier now because there is no martial law," she said.

Aquino's comments follow the failure of Arroyo's opponents to muster enough public support to replicate the mammoth but nonviolent protests that toppled Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001.

She thanked young Filipinos who have begun to speak out against corruption, and urged graft witness Rodolfo Lozada Jr. and his family to be patient amid their current difficulties.



Rodolfo Lozada, second left, and former President Corazon Aquino, left, joined by other religious leaders, pray during a mass at the University of Santo Tomas Sunday, March 2, 2008 in Manila.

Afghans protest prophet cartoon

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Hundreds of demonstrators set the Danish and Dutch flags ablaze Sunday in northern Afghanistan to protest the reprint of Prophet Muhammad cartoons in Denmark and an upcoming Dutch film criticizing the Quran.

Clerics and madrassa students gathered in front of Afghanistan's largest shrine in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif to demand the government shut down the Danish and Dutch embassies in Kabul.

"We don't want our government to have any diplomatic relations with these two countries," said Maulawi Abdul Hadi, one of the clerics organizing the protest. "We don't want Danish and

Dutch troops in Afghanistan. They should be kicked out of the NATO forces here."

Denmark has 780 troops in Afghanistan as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and the Netherlands has 1,650.

Hadi said about 100 clerics and madrassa students launched Sunday's protest.

The crowd swelled to about 700 before dispersing, provincial police spokesman Sher Jan Durrani said, adding that the protest was peaceful.

Hadi said the organizers ended the protest after two and half hours because it had grown too large and they were concerned it might turn violent.

World

Chavez warns of war with Colombia

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) -- President Hugo Chavez ordered tanks and thousands of troops on Sunday to the border with Colombia, accusing it of pushing South America to the brink of war by killing a top rebel leader on Ecuadorean soil.

Denouncing Colombia's slaying of the rebel commander in a cross-border raid into Ecuador, Chavez said Venezuela will respond militarily if Colombia violates its border. He ordered Venezuela's embassy in Bogota closed.

"Mr. Defense Minister, move 10 battalions to the border with Colombia for me, immediately - tank battalions. Deploy the air force," Chavez said during his

weekly TV and radio program. "We don't want war, but we aren't going to permit the U.S. empire, which is the master (of Colombia) ... to come divide us."

Chavez called Colombian President Alvaro Uribe "a criminal" and branded his government a "terrorist state," likening it to Israel for its U.S.-backed attacks on militants.

In protest, Ecuador withdrew its ambassador from Bogota, ordered Colombia's top diplomat expelled and ordered the mobilization of troops to the border

with Colombia.

Ecuador's president, Rafael Correa, said Colombia deliberately carried out the strike beyond its borders. "There is no justification," Correa said Sunday night, snubbing an earlier announcement from Colombia that it would apologize for the incursion.

Colombian officials have long complained that Ecuador's military does not control its sparsely populated border, allowing rebels to take refuge.

The same holds true for Venezuela, where rebel deserters



Chavez

say the guerrillas routinely rest, train, obtain medical care and smuggle drugs. Chavez denies that his country provides refuge to the FARC.

In a statement, Colombia said FARC "terrorists" including Reyes "have had the custom of killing in Colombia and taking refuge in the territory of neighboring countries."

Correa said the rebels were "bombed and massacred as they slept, using precision technology." He said Colombia violated Ecuador's airspace when it bombed the rebel camp, which the Colombian military said was located 1.1 miles from the border.

Ecuadorean soldiers recovered

the semi-nude bodies of 15 rebels in their jungle camp. Soldiers stood guard at the site, saying they also found three wounded women, who were evacuated by helicopter to be treated. One was a Mexican philosophy student injured by shrapnel, while the other two wounded guerrillas were Colombians, an Ecuadorean army officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to journalists.

Ecuadorean officials found that there were two bomb attacks on the camp early Saturday, Lt. Col. Jose Nunez told reporters in the remote village of Angostura, where the bodies were found.

UN nuclear watchdog to focus on Iran

VIENNA, Austria (AP) -- European powers have prepared a resolution for next week's meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency that focuses on Iran's nuclear defiance, diplomats said Sunday.

But a senior Iranian official warned against such action at the Vienna-based IAEA when the agency starts its 35-nation board meeting Monday. And diplomats said that traditional opposition by nonaligned IAEA board member nations could lead the Europeans to rethink their plans.

In any case, a Western decision on whether to lobby all 35 nations to back such a resolution would likely wait until after Monday's scheduled vote on sanctions in the U.N. Security Council, they told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because the information was confidential.

The five permanent council members with veto power - the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France - are all backing the new resolution, and they have more than the nine "yes" votes needed for approval in the 15-member council.

But four non-permanent council members have raised a variety of concerns - Libya, Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam.

In Vienna, a critical IAEA resolution drafted by Britain, France and Germany would be supported by the majority of board members - including the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and the EU.

Putin, Medvedev pledge unified path

MOSCOW (AP) -- Dmitry Medvedev, the man Vladimir Putin hand-picked to be his successor, scored a crushing victory in Russia's presidential election Sunday, a result that was long anticipated but that still raises questions about who will run this resurgent global power.

Medvedev had more than 70 percent of the vote with 97 percent of the precincts counted, according to the Central Election Commission. He is expected to rule in concert with his mentor, an arrangement that could see Putin calling the shots despite his constitutionally subordinate position as Russia's prime minister.

Medvedev, 42, the youngest Russian ruler since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, is expected to heed Putin's advice, continue his assertive course with the West, maintain state control over Rus-

sia's mineral riches and freeze out real opposition movements.

"We will increase stability, improve the quality of life and move forward on the path we have chosen," Medvedev said Sunday, appearing alongside Putin at a celebration at the Red Square outside the Kremlin. "We will be able to preserve the course of President Putin."

Putin said Medvedev "has taken a firm lead" and congratulated his protege.

"Such a victory carries a lot of obligations," Putin said. "This victory will serve as a guarantee that the course we have chosen, the successful course we have been following over the past eight years, will be continued."

Medvedev ran against three rivals apparently permitted on the ballot because of their loyalty to the Kremlin line. But the

two candidates—Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov and ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy - still alleged violations after the voting ended.

Zyuganov, Medvedev's nearest challenger with 18 percent, said he would dispute the result. Zhirinovskiy threatened to do so as well before backing down.

Some voters complained of pressure to cast ballots for Medvedev, and critics called the election a cynical stage show to ensure unbroken rule by Putin and his allies.

Sunday's vote came after a tightly controlled campaign and months of political maneuvering by Putin, who appeared determined to keep a strong hand on Russia's reins while maintaining the basic trappings of electoral democracy and leaving the constitution intact.



Vladimir Putin, left, and his hand-picked successor Dmitry Medvedev wave to their supporters standing side-by-side at the stage during a concert to mark presidential election at the Moscow Red Square late Sunday, March 2, 2008.

Palestinians suspend peace talks with Israel

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) -- The Palestinian president suspended peace talks Sunday as Israel brushed off international criticism and vowed to press ahead with its Gaza offensive until militants halt rocket attacks.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said an even broader Gaza operation was possible, aimed at crushing militant rocket squads but also to "weaken the Hamas rule, in the right circumstances, even to bring it down."

The Palestinian death toll rose by 26, bringing the number killed to 114 since the latest bout of fighting erupted on Wednesday, according to Palestinian medical officials and militant groups. At least 54 Palestinians and two Israelis were killed on Saturday, the single deadliest day in more than seven years of fighting.

The Gaza onslaught has failed to protect southern Israel, where residents have faced repeated

rocket attacks since 2001. Gaza militants fired more than 25 rockets at southern Israel Sunday, the military said, scoring direct hits on houses in the city of Ashkelon and the town of Sderot. Nine Israelis were injured, rescue services said.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said peace talks with Israel had been halted.

"For the time being, the negotiations are suspended because we have so many funerals," he said. It was unclear when the talks, relaunched last November at a U.S.-hosted summit, would resume.

The violence clouded an upcoming visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders have set a December target for concluding a final peace deal. But instead of promoting peace, Rice will likely spend her visit this week trying to put out the latest fire.

Ahmadinejad: US fueling Iraqi violence

BAGHDAD (AP) -- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on an historic trip to Baghdad Sunday that America fueled the violence in Iraq, portraying his nation as a close friend of the neighbor it once fought in a bitter eight-year war.

Ahmadinejad, the first Iranian president to visit Iraq, disputed U.S. allegations that Tehran is training and equipping Shiite militias there. The American presence, he said, was responsible for drawing terrorists.

"The Iraqi people do not like the Americans," Ahmadinejad said at a press conference with U.S.-backed Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in the Green Zone - the heart of the American diplomatic presence.

"Six years ago, there were no terrorists in our region. As soon as the others landed in this country and the region, we witnessed

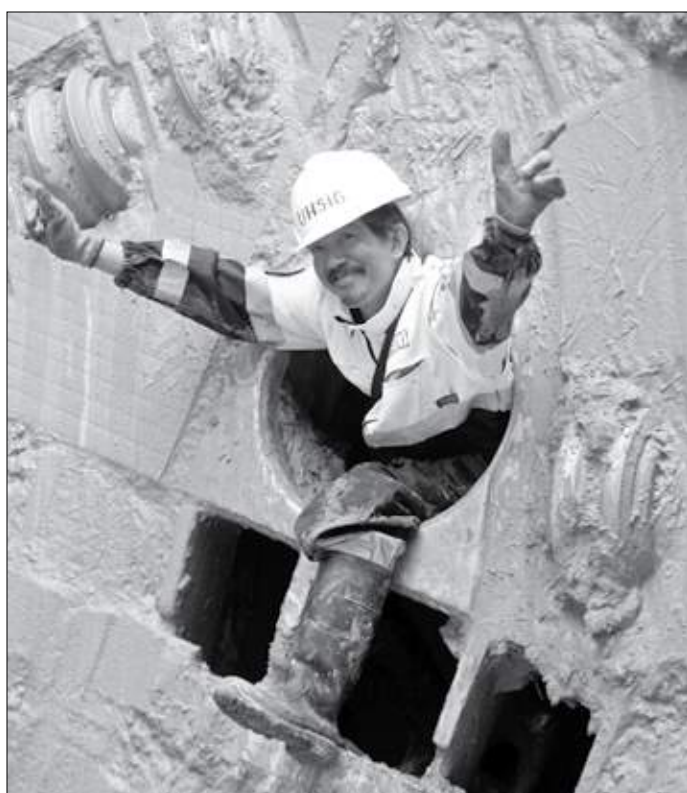
their arrival and presence," Ahmadinejad said Sunday night after meeting Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of Iraq's largest Shiite political bloc.

The trip by Ahmadinejad, who once fought Saddam Hussein's Sunni-dominated regime as a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, was a dramatic illustration of one of the unintended consequences of the 2003 U.S. invasion - the replacement of Saddam with Shiite forces closely allied to the cleric-led Islamic

republic next door. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, a Sunni Kurd, greeted Ahmadinejad with an honor guard and a band that played both countries' national anthems. The two held hands at the red-carpet welcome ceremony in a traditional display of friendship. Talabani told Ahmadinejad to call him "Uncle Jalal," as he known in Iraq's Kurdish north.



Ahmadinejad



AP

CANADIAN TUNNEL

Magusig Mendoza of the Philippines waves to the crowd as he emerges from the tunnel boring machine in Vancouver, Sunday, March 2, 2008. The machine broke through the ground completing the second and final Canada Line bored tunnel. The transit line is an integral transportation link for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Overdrive

Lexus enters fast company



The IS-F (starting at \$56,000) fills what had been lacking in Lexus' lineup - an option to Mercedes-Benz's AMG, BMW's M-series and Audi's S and RS autos.

By DAN NEIL

(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

In the style of BMW's M3, the new Lexus IS-F is the brand's toe in the water of the factory-tuner segment—though it's less like a toe than a fiery cloven hoof. This car started life as a Lexus IS350, a roundly capable and syrupy smooth sport sedan of no great note or interest. Boring, actually. Then it got rabies.

Now the car is very interesting: a rudely bulging front end, a 416-hp mountain motor bolted to a (count-'em) eight-speed transmission, gargantuan Brembo brakes and a suspension stiffer than Dita Von Teese's corset stays.

Pointless? Deeply so. Was there ever an answer to a question so unasked as a hyper-performance Lexus? Still, here we are, and we shouldn't be surprised. The hole in Lexus' bucket has been high-performance variants to rival the Mercedes-Benz AMG cars, BMW's M-series and Audi's S and RS cars. These cars matter little to a luxury brand's bottom line but mean everything when it comes to landing magazine covers. And, God knows, Lexus—the haute couture outlet of Toyota—has the money.

Lexus aspires to sell between 3,000 and 4,000 IS-Fs in the U.S. in the first year, which would make it a very rare car, the automotive equivalent of Zoroastrianism.

A curious historical note is that the IS-F's direct-injection V8 is the same basic motor under the hood of the Lexus LS600h hybrid limousine—though “basic” it's not. This engine—co-developed with Yamaha—hyperventilates like the front row of a Cher concert. Among its performance modifications: titanium intake valves, hollow camshafts, better-breathing cylinder heads and an extra oil-scavenging circuit to keep it all lubricated during high-G cornering. The business end of this unit cranks out 371 pound-feet of obscene, tire-murdering torque at a relatively busy 5,200 rpm.

The engine's most vulgar feature, however, is the dual-inlet intake manifold, found somewhere inside the maze of engine plumbing. If you mash the gas in this car hard enough, this second inlet channel opens and the engine note transforms from a mellow Japanese woofle to a soul-tingling, lycanthropic howl. Stay off da moorrns, laddie!

The car also sings. The IS-F is equipped with an eight-speed automatic transmission, in which the gear ratio intervals are very evenly spaced. Eight speeds happen to correlate to eight notes

of the diatonic scale—do, re, mi, etc. If you hold the throttle and speed steady, and you shift up and down with the shifter paddles, you can actually coax simple melodies out of the stacked-pipe quad exhaust, for instance, “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” And, yes, I get paid for this.

The eight-speed gearbox is truly the heart of this car and the source of its license-losing magic. In manual mode, the lock-up clutch remains engaged in second through eighth gears, so that the automatic transmission behaves like a clutchless manual transmission—which is to say, when you lift off the gas going into a corner, you get engine-compression braking and big crackling overrun sounds from the exhaust. That's filthy hot. Meanwhile, this is the quickest and smoothest-shifting automatic south of

But where this car really shines is in mid-range acceleration. Puttering along at 65 mph in D, tap the right-side shifter paddle four times and bury the pedal. The big, deep-bolstered sport seat gathers you up like a jai alai basket and hurls you at the horizon.

Now you know what a front-side wedgie feels like.

And yet, for all its babbling brook of future tech and inscrutable acronyms like VDIM (Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management), in one respect the IS-F feels very old school: the low-revving engine. An annoying warning tone sounds when the revs go over about 6,300 rpm and the fuel cutoff (the redline) is set at what feels like an unnaturally low 6,800 rpm. A warranty protection system? A Chevrolet Monte



The IS-F is equipped with an eight-speed automatic transmission, in which the gear ratio intervals are very evenly spaced.

the Porsche 911 Turbo. At full throttle, the gear changes require less than a 10th of a second and are heard more than felt.

Put it all together and you've got a major piece of hardware but a car of two temperaments. Driven with restraint, the IS-F motors along like any other Lexus: quiet, tractable, with a miles-deep sense of quality (although our test car had a creaky driver's seat mount). Start poking the accelerator and the car wakes up like you've thrown a cat on it—angry and ready to fight. Hole-shot acceleration is ferocious: zero-to-60 mph goes by a shade over 4 seconds, which is just plain crazy in a four-door sedan with an automatic transmission.

Carlo SS revs higher. I guess it's a good thing the Lexus has eight gears.

For chassis upgrades, Lexus ordered parts from a stone quarry and Bethlehem Steel. The front and rear spring and shock packages are super-stiff and—with the wheels tied together by major anti-roll bars front and rear—the ride quality varies from brisk to brutal. Because the ride height is so low, and the suspension travel so flinty, the car can easily run out of compliance on bumpy roads and get into a jarring, head-tossing, kidney-bruising fit. Also—as I found out on some of the local canyon roads—once the suspension travel is used up, the thing will skip and skitter madly through a turn.

CRUISIN'

Tire speed ratings

By GREG ZYLA

(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: Greg, I just bought a 2000 Camaro Z28, and it came with new Kumho 225/50R-16 H-rated BSW tires. Can you please explain the speed rating system? The sidewall says H for the speed rating, but a friend says the Z28 came from the factory with Z-rated tires because the car can go more than 145 mph. Is this tire OK for my car?—Karen K., e-mail from Washington.

A: Karen, relax, because you have a good tire in the Kumho. All tires have speed ratings stamped into the sidewall along with other information like traction and tread-wear ratings, size and maximum tire pressure. The speed rating is calculated as the maximum speed the manufacturer feels is safe. The H-rated Kumho tire on your Z28 is called its Ecsta AST brand, and it is a high-performance tire that offers good overall all-season traction.

The original Z28, if memory serves, did come with Z-rated tires, good for 149-plus mph. The Kumhos are good for 130 mph, which I feel is certainly good enough unless you plan to run at the Bonneville Salt Flats. Here's a breakdown of the actual speed ratings found on the sidewalls of tires.

Q—Up to 100 mph
R—Up to 106 mph
S—Up to 112 mph
T—Up to 118 mph
U—Up to 124 mph
H—Up to 130 mph
V—Up to 149 mph
Z—Over 149 mph
W—Up to 168 mph
Y—Up to 186 mph

There you have it, Karen. Personally, I own a 1994 Trans-Am, which is very similar to your Z28. I have Hoosier V-rated tires on it and feel totally comfortable, as I would with the H-rated high-performance Kumho.

■ ■ ■

Q: Greg, I really enjoy your column on classic cars and the hobby of car collecting and restoring. I currently buy Hemmings Motor News and read it every month. I also like eBay very much, and check on that site for classic cars. What other publications do you read, and what online sites would be of interest to me? I am retired, got a computer not long ago, and enjoy your articles and the computer.—Bob P., Maryland

A: First, congratulations on buying a computer and merging online and print into your daily collector-car hobby activities.

As for my favorites when it comes to cars and the hobby, I subscribe to print publications Hemmings Muscle Car Magazine, Super Chevy, Hot Rod, Car Craft, and Auto Roundup Magazine—all well worth the price. I, too, browse eBay, Hemmings and Auto Roundup sites regularly, and a new Internet site I highly recommend is called ClassicCars.com, a company launched by Roger Falcione.

Falcione has a history of success with e-commerce and online automotive sites, including GoRacing.com and MotorWeb.com, both highly regarded in auto racing and specialty auto-parts segments, respectively.

Currently, ClassicCars.com offers alternative ways to connect buyers and sellers nationwide, with vehicles ranging from \$1,000 to \$1 million plus. Based in Phoenix, Ariz., Falcione's ClassicCars.com has 10,000 vehicle listings and \$250 million in online inventory.

So get ready, Bob, and enjoy both print and online, and get ready for quite an experience when you go to www.classiccars.com.

Write to Greg Zyla in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send an e-mail to gzyla@ptd.net.

In Loving Memory of
**Lourdes Cabrera
 Deleon Guerrero**

SEPTEMBER 27, 1949 - MARCH 1, 2008

was called to join her creator on Saturday,
 March 1, 2008 at the age of 58
 (at Asia Hospital, Philippines)

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Husband – **Edward Masga Deleon Guerrero**

Her Children and Grandchildren:

Yvonne DLG. and Dennis M. Reyes
 Jake, Alexis, Kyana (Joseph, JDen)

Edward C. and Maureen B. Deleon Guerrero
 Jerry, Joshua, Keesha, Keith

† **Joseph** C. Deleon Guerrero
 Jashlie, Jacob, Ashlynn, Donovan Jay, Ava Lourette

Kulani DLG. and Ben Sablan
 Peter, Edward, Brandon, Nathan, Brittany, Clayton

Reared Son and Daughter:

Peter Ryan Deleon Guerrero
 Sylvia Alexis Deleon Guerrero

She will also be missed by her brothers, sisters and in-laws:

Ana C. Celis and Children
 Larry & Lillian C. Leon Guerrero and Family
 Charlie & Dolores C. Leon Guerrero and Family
 Nicolasa M. Cabrera and Children
 Diego & Donna Cabrera and Family
 Margarita S. Cabrera and Family
 Aida D. Cabrera and Children
 Ramon & Rosalina T. Cabrera and Family

Jose Pangelinan and Children
 Jose & Isabel C. Delon Guerrero and Family
 Herman & Asunta C. Deleon Guerrero and Family
 John & Lisa Deleon Guerrero and Family
 Thomas & Oliva C. Deleon Guerrero and Family
 Francisco & Joanne T. Deleon Guerrero and family
 Vicente & Nadine S. Deleon Guerrero and Family
 David Deleon Guerrero and Frances Rebuenog and Family
 Santiago & Tara Deleon Guerrero and Family
 Douglas & Regina DLG. Cushnie and Family
 Ben & Joaquina DLG. Salas and Family
 Magdalena Deleon Guerrero & Edward Aguon and Family
 John & MaryAnn DLG. Sablan and Family
 Ignacio M. & Vivian S. Deleon Guerrero and Family



In her new life, she now joins her:

Parents: †Antonio Sablan Cabrera

†Sylvia Manibusan Cabrera

Parents-In-Law: †Ignacio Sablan Deleon Guerrero

†Teofilia Masga Deleon Guerrero

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws:

† Antonia Manibusan Cabrera

† Vicente Manibusan Cabrera

† Jose Manibusan Cabrera

† Daniel Sablan Celis

† Maria Sakisat Pangelinan

Her remains will be arriving from Manila, Philippines on
 Wednesday, March 5, 2008 and will be lying in state at Nuestra
 Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel.

Funeral Services will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2008.

Her remains will be taken from Nuestra Señora dela Paz
 Memorial Chapel at 7:30 a.m. to OL Mt. Carmel Cathedral.
 Responso Service will be at 8:00 a.m. followed by Holy Rosary
 at 8:30 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at
 11:00 a.m. Interment Services will take place at Sanctuario
 Pax Memorial Gardens in Kagman.



† **Joseph Cabrera
 Deleon Guerrero**

MAY 30, 1975 - MARCH 31, 2007

A joined Daily Mass of Inten-
 tions is being celebrated at San
 Vicente Church at 6:00 p.m.
 followed by Holy Rosary at
 7:00 p.m. for the reposed souls
 of † Lourdes Cabrera Deleon
 Guerrero and her son † Joseph
 Cabrera Deleon Guerrero in
 commemoration of his
First Death Anniversary.

Thank you – Si Yu'us Ma'ase
 Please Join Us In Prayers.

**Edward M. DeLeon Guerrero
 Children and Family**

Life & Style

New 'Indiana Jones' trailer is smash hit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Times sure have changed in the 19 years since Harrison Ford last donned the signature fedora of thrill-seeking archaeologist Indiana Jones. The viral spread of the trailer for "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" is proof of that.

The trailer for the May 22 release has drawn highly enthusiastic responses in theaters. But it may have had its biggest impact online, on a younger audience that may not think of Ford, 65, as equal to today's spry action heroes.

After premiering Feb. 14 on "Good Morning America," Lucasfilm and Viacom Inc.'s Paramount Pictures sent the trailer to the Web, plus movie theaters and TV stations around the world. Paramount estimates the trailer was seen more than 200 million times worldwide in the first week alone.

Harry Knowles, who runs the movie fan site AintItCool.com (his official title is Head Geek), says he first saw a bootleg version of the trailer online, then the official version online, and then saw it twice in theaters.

There were cheers in the theater when the familiar theme song kicked in, Knowles said,



This undated photo released by Paramount Pictures shows Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones and Shia LaBeouf in "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull."

and comments on his Web site have been positive. "People generally really, really loved the trailer," he said. "Some people think it's a little more cartoonish-looking compared to the prior (films), with him whipping the lights and swinging on them and stuff. But at the same time, it seems that everyone is extremely excited that there's a

new 'Indiana Jones' film. The excitement for it is palpable. It's much more aggressively anticipated than anything else that's coming out right now."

"The trailer caught on like wildfire, around the world, in all mediums," said Gerry Rich, Paramount's president of worldwide marketing, who's targeting moviegoers "from 8 to 80. The re-

'Semi-Pro' scores \$15M, tops box office

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Will Ferrell's basketball comedy "Semi-Pro" dribbled to the top of the weekend box office, but it fell short of his previous blockbuster openings in the sports spoof genre, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The New Line Cinema film, starring Ferrell as the owner of a fictional basketball franchise, grossed \$15.3 million in its weekend debut. That was lackluster compared to Ferrell's 2006 NASCAR parody "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby," which opened at \$47 million, and last year's figure skating comedy "Blades of Glory," which earned \$33 million in its first weekend.

Box office analysts said "Semi-Pro" likely suffered because it was released during a normally slow season and was rated R, while "Talladega Nights" and "Blades of Glory"

were rated PG-13.

"Will Ferrell is always a draw and audiences love him. But this particular weekend is not quite as strong as his earlier efforts," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of the box-office tracker Media By Numbers LLC.

New Line representatives declined to comment. Last week,

1. "Semi-Pro," \$15.3 million.
2. "Vantage Point," \$13 million.
3. "Spiderwick Chronicles," \$8.8 million.
4. "The Other Boleyn Girl," \$8.3 million
5. "Jumper," \$7.6 million.
6. "Step Up 2 The Streets," \$5.7 million.
7. "Fool's Gold," \$4.7 million.
8. "Penelope," \$4 million.
9. "No Country For Old Men," \$4 million.
10. "Juno," \$3.4 million.

media conglomerate Time Warner Inc. announced that New Line would be merged with its Warner Bros. Entertainment studio to cut costs and improve profitability.

Last weekend's top film, the Sony Pictures terrorism thriller

"Vantage Point," dropped to second place with \$13 million in ticket sales, bringing its two-week domestic total to \$41 million.

Sony's new release "The Other Boleyn Girl" performed better than expected, opening at No. 4 with \$8.3 million at 1,166 theaters. Its \$7,118 per theater average outdistanced other movies in the marketplace.

The weekend's other opening, the Summit Entertainment fantasy romantic comedy "Penelope," debuted in eighth place with \$4 million.

Box office revenues overall were down for the third straight week. The top 12 movies grossed \$81 million, down 10 percent from last weekend and 25 percent from the same weekend in 2007.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

Hip-hop's Simmons endorses Obama

NEW YORK (AP)—Russell Simmons has been pushing young people to vote, but for a while there, it was looking as if the music industry heavyweight would have trouble casting his own ballot.

Not anymore.

The hip-hop mogul said Sunday he is endorsing Barack Obama for president, inspired by the diversity among the Il-

linois senator's supporters. Obama has built an unprecedented national movement of people from all ethnic, racial, political, social and economic backgrounds, Simmons said in a news release.

It was a little more than a year ago that Simmons, the co-founder of Def Jam Recordings who says he's an independent who has supported Democrats and Republi-

cans, sounded as if he was having a hard time deciding.

"If you could take Barack Obama's image, add Hillary Rodham Clinton's money and John Edwards' voice, that would be my candidate," Simmons said in January 2007.

At the time, Simmons called Obama "a rock star" who hadn't presented a clear picture of where he stands.

sponse has been sensational and it shows what technology can do when you have material that is so appealing to audiences."

Older audiences certainly remember Indy, but that's not the prime ticket-buying demographic. Thus the aggressive online campaign, which included what Paramount says is a record 4.1 million views on the Yahoo movie site in the first week and 2.6 million on the official IndianaJones.com site, the most ever for the studio.

"It looks to be THE highly anticipated movie of the summer," said Mark Mazrimas, marketing manager for independent theater chain Classic Cinemas. However, "this hasn't been on

the screen for so long, (the challenge) is capturing the youth."

The brainchild of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, the franchise kicked off with "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark" in 1981, followed by "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" three summers later. "The Last Crusade" was released in 1989, boosting the worldwide box office total to \$1.2 billion.

Now, with the buzz sparked, Rich—who declined to make opening weekend predictions—just wants to keep fans' attention: "The (only) negative comment from people was that they have to wait until May to see the movie."

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Semi-Pro

Friday 4:25 7:30 9:35
 Saturday 1:25 4:25 7:30 9:35
 Sunday 1:25 4:25 7:30
 Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:30

Will Ferrell, Woody Harrelson
 Comedy, Sports • Rated R

Synopsis

In 1976, the maverick ABA is a fast-paced, wild and crazy basketball league that rivals the NBA and makes a name for itself with innovations like the three-point shot and slam dunk contest. Jackie Moon is a one-hit wonder who used the profits from the success of his chart-topping song "Love Me Sexy" to achieve his dream of owning a basketball team. But Moon's franchise, the Flint Michigan Tropics, is the worst team in the league and in danger of folding when the ABA announces its plans to merge with the NBA.



Bahay Kubo

Friday 4:20 7:10 9:50
 Saturday 1:15 4:20 7:10 9:50
 Sunday 1:15 4:20 7:10
 Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:10

Maricel Soriano, Eric Quizon
 Comedy, Drama • Rated NR

Synopsis

The story revolves around the life of Eden Manahan (Maricel Soriano) as she constantly struggles to maintain her family together as well as her relationship with her husband Perry (Eric Santos), best friend Marang (Eugene Domingo) and with her mother Ida (Gloria Romero). Eden has brought up a family in which most of them are adopted children, wherein all her daughters are named after flowers.



Vantage Point

Friday 4:15 7:00 9:45
 Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:00 9:45
 Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:00
 Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:00

Dennis Quaid, Forest Whitaker
 Drama, Thriller • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Thomas Barnes and Kent Taylor are two Secret Service agents assigned to protect President Ashton at a landmark summit on the global war on terror. When President Ashton is shot moments after his arrival in Spain, chaos ensues and disparate lives collide. In the crowd is Howard Lewis, an American tourist videotaping the historic event to show his kids when he returns home. Also there is Rex, an American TV news producer who is reporting on the conference.



The Spiderwick Chronicles

Friday 4:00 7:20 9:30
 Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:20 9:30
 Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:20
 Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:20

Seth Rogen, Mary-Louise Parker
 Fantasy, Children • Rated PG13



Untraceable

Friday 4:30 7:05 9:55
 Saturday 1:30 4:30 7:05 9:55
 Sunday 1:30 4:30 7:05
 Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:05

Diane Lane, Billy Burke
 Drama, Thriller, Crime • Rated R



Fool's Gold

Friday 4:10 7:15 10:00
 Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:15 10:00
 Sunday 1:20 4:10 7:15
 Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:15

Matthew McConaughey, Kate Hudson
 Action, Adventure • Rated PG13



Jumper

Friday 4:05 7:25 9:40
 Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:25 9:40
 Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:25
 Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:25

Hayden Christensen, Samuel L. Jackson
 Adventure, Sci-Fi • Rated PG13

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[www.gohollywood.com](http://WWW.GOHOLLYWOOD.COM)

Prince Harry wants another combat tour

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry, home from his abandoned military mission to Afghanistan, said he hopes to return to combat zones as soon as possible.

Harry returned to England on Saturday after serving for 10 weeks as a soldier in Afghanistan's volatile Helmand province. His secret tour of duty—due to last until April—was abruptly aborted after a magazine and Web sites disclosed details of his whereabouts.

The prince's mission had previously gone unreported as part of an agreement, designed to protect the 23-year-old prince and his fellow soldiers, between the Ministry of Defense and major news organizations.

"'Angry' would be the wrong word to use but I am slightly disappointed. I thought I could see it through to the end and come back with our guys," Harry said after landing at an air force base where he was met by his father, Prince Charles, and brother, Prince William.

Harry—a cornet, or second lieutenant—said he hoped to return to Afghanistan soon and has already asked his commanding officer to approve a new mission.

"I would love to go back out, and I've already mentioned it to him that I want to go out very, very soon," he said.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, head of Britain's armed forces, said Sunday that any future deployment would depend on whether Harry poses a risk to his colleagues.

"I would have to be clear that the risks to the operation, in the widest sense of the people deployed on that operation, would



In this photo made available Sunday, March 2, 2008, Britain's Prince Harry is seen playing rugby with fellow soldiers during a break in their duties in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Feb. 20, 2008.

be no higher than they would normally be," Stirrup told Britain's Sky News television.

Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt, head of Britain's army, said there is no immediate prospect of the prince returning to the front line for 12 to 18 months.

"Actually, the immediate prospect of Prince Harry going anywhere else is some way off

in the future," he said, explaining that the prince has a usual rest period and then a number of training and regimental commitments.

But Harry's elder brother—second in line to the British throne—is likely to serve overseas with the military, probably on board a Royal Navy warship, the defense ministry said.

William could be deployed later this year on a tour to areas such as the South Atlantic, the Persian Gulf, the Pacific Ocean or the West Indies, officials said.

"It's our intention to give Prince William as full a taste of life in the Royal Navy as possible," a Navy spokesman said on customary condition of anonymity.

William—the presumptive future king of Britain—has trained as a fighter pilot and is eager to serve overseas, Harry said.

"I know he'd love to, whether it's on the ground or whether it's 15,000 feet up, bombs strapped to the wings," he said during an interview last week in Afghanistan.

Harry's work in southern Afghanistan involved calling in airstrikes on Taliban positions, as well as foot and tank patrols. He said he was realistic about the consequences of fighting against the Taliban.

"You do what you have to do, what's necessary to save your own guys," he said. "If you need to drop a bomb, worst case scenario then you will, but then that's just the way it is."

Harry said a number of wounded troops were transported home on his flight back to Britain.

"The bravery of the guys out there was humbling," he said.

Prince Charles said Britain's royal family was disappointed the prince had been forced to abandon his tour.

"I feel particular frustration that he was removed unexpectedly early because, apart from anything else, he had been looking forward to coming back with the rest of his regiment," Charles said.

Notre Dame honors activist-actor Sheen

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP)—Activist-actor Martin Sheen will be honored by the University of Notre Dame with its Laetare Medal for his humanitarian work, the school announced Sunday.

Sheen, who starred as a U.S. president who was a Notre Dame graduate in NBC's "The West Wing," is to receive the medal at the school's May 18 commencement.

Since 1883, the Laetare Medal has been awarded annually to a Catholic "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the church and enriched the heritage of humanity."

Recipients include President Kennedy,

Actor Martin Sheen arrives at the 2007 Los Angeles Film Festival's opening night premiere of "Talk to Me," in this June 21, 2007 file photo, in Los Angeles.

former Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan Jr. and former U.S. House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr.

Sheen has used his recognition as an actor to help others, said the university's president, the Rev. John I. Jenkins.

"He has used that celebrity to draw the attention of his fellow citizens to issues that cry out for redress, such as the plight of immigrant workers and homeless people, the waging of unjust war, the killing of the unborn and capital punishment," Jenkins said.

Sheen, 67, describes himself as a Catholic peace activist. He has been arrested for taking part in nonviolent demonstrations against various U.S. military policies, and has donated money and time to such causes as the alleviation of poverty and homelessness, human rights for migrant workers and environmental protection.

with an "editorial response."

The sketch, she said, "wasn't an endorsement of one candidate over another. I can say this confidently because when I asked if I could take it as an endorsement, I was told, 'Absolutely not.' But I still enjoyed that sketch a great deal because I simply adore Amy's impression of me."

When Poehler asked her how the campaign was going, Clinton responded: "The campaign is going very well. Very, very well. Why, what have you heard?"

fawned over her rival, Barack Obama. Clinton brought up the sketch during last Tuesday's debate between the two candidates, and the campaign has encouraged supporters and voters to watch it on NBC's Web site.

This weekend's episode opened with a similar sketch recreating Tuesday's debate. It portrayed NBC anchors Brian Williams and Tim Russert asking Clinton, played by Amy Poehler, tough questions while serving softballs to Obama.

Then the real Clinton appeared onscreen

Keeping track of passwords is word to the wise online

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: Allow me to draw your readers' attention to the importance of keeping track of their online log-in information. We all know it's smart to keep photocopies of our driver's license, credit cards, etc. With as much time as some of us spend online, in addition to the billions of dollars we spend there as a nation, it's wise to keep track of sundry log-in details as well.

I keep track of the various Web sites from which I make purchases—the Web site name, user name and my password—because various Web sites require different information.

Please suggest that your readers compile this information in a single document and print it out from time to time. Keep a hard copy in a safe place with other important papers. That way, if anything should happen to them, family members will be able to access these Web sites, delete saved credit card information and close the accounts.

—KATHERINE V., EAST LIVERPOOL, OHIO

DEAR KATHERINE V.: You have offered an excellent suggestion, and I'm pleased to pass it along. Readers, because none of us know when an emergency such as incapacitation (or death) should strike, this "insurance policy" could be invaluable to those left to handle our affairs. (This does not apply to those of you who plan to live forever.)

To secure log-in/password information, print out the document you have created and put it in a safe-deposit box or under lock and key in a file cabinet. If you keep the document in your computer, be sure to secure it with a strong password or use commercially available privacy software.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: At what age do you discontinue using the term "Master" before a young boy's name when addressing an envelope? I have searched books without success. I hope you can help.

—MS. D. IN PORT CHARLOTTE, FLA.

DEAR MS. D.: Good question. According to my 16th Edition of "Emily Post's Etiquette" by Peggy Post: "Boys may be addressed as 'Master' on envelopes and formal correspondence until they are about 7 years old, and 'Mr.' when they become 18. In between, no title is used."

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Most people complain about their jobs because they feel they don't make enough money. My problem is the opposite. I love my job, but I think I make too much money.

My job is mostly simple work that could be done by anybody—yet I earn almost as much as my husband, who is a supervisor in a technical field. My boss always gives me excellent reviews and doesn't seem concerned.

It's nice to have the kind of job that isn't stressful. But I feel guilty that a lot of people with more difficult jobs make less than I do. Should I tell my boss to give me a pay cut, or take the money and run?

—CUT OR RUN IN WISCONSIN

DEAR CUT OR RUN: I won't reveal your exact location because many people would kill to have your job. The answer to your question is you should neither ask for a pay cut nor take the money and run. Feeling as you do, you should donate every cent you feel you are overpaid to a charity (or to a therapist who can help you overcome your sense of guilt).

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

'Live, from New York,' it's... Hillary?

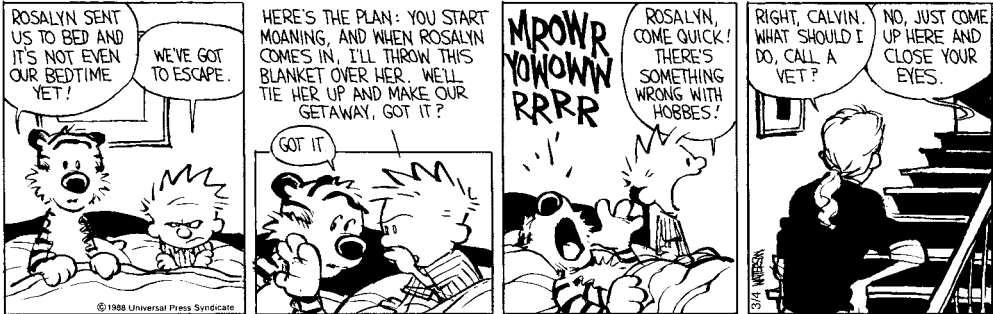
NEW YORK (AP)—Hillary Rodham Clinton took a break from the campaign trail to thank "Saturday Night Live" for giving her candidacy a boost—although she failed to get an official endorsement from the show.

Clinton's campaign has gotten a good deal of mileage out of an "SNL" sketch from a week ago in which reporters

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



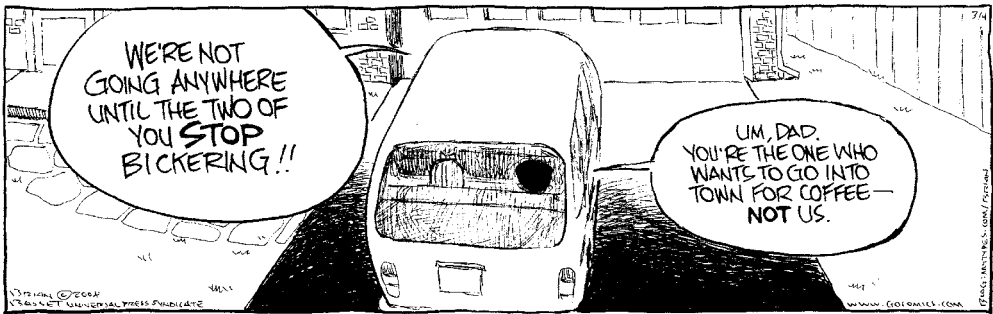
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Hammer wielder of myth

5 Not functioning

8 Texas Hold 'Em item

12 Meditator's practice

13 Fish eggs

14 Hydrox rival

15 Easy to move

17 — do-well

18 Scratch (out)

19 eBay offer

20 Sacred song

21 Dog's doc

22 Write in the margins

23 Cut the lawn

26 Southwest people

30 Overly proper one

31 Oktoberfest souvenir

32 Gridlock sound

33 Summer-houses

DOWN

1 Work at the keyboard

2 Worm holder?

3 Shrek, for instance

4 Tattletale

5 Trip around the world?

6 Pleat

7 Retainer

8 Peace-keeping officer

9 Vicinity

10 Rod's partner

11 Coed quarters

16 Sleeping an ed.'s desk

17 20 Questions category

22 Binge

23 Car economy abbr.

24 Man-mouse link

25 Emerald City bigwig

26 Greek consonants

27 Lustrious black

28 — the fields we go"

29 Resort

31 Off-tattooed word

34 Hudson, for one

35 Monad

37 Last writes?

38 Rue the run

39 Flushing stadium

40 Seeks damages

41 Partially mine

42 Help a hood

43 Run away

44 Office fill-in

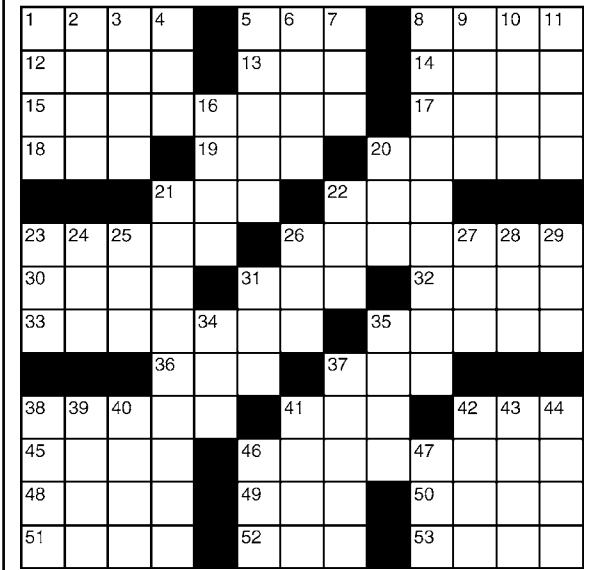
46 "Casa-blanca" pianist

47 Fool

Solution time: 21 mins.

J	A	R	C	A	B	W	R	I	T
A	V	O	W	O	R	R	H	O	L
M	E	S	H	P	I	E	I	D	L
B	R	A	I	D	A	M	P		
	P	E	T	D	E	P	I	C	T
C	A	S	P	I	A	N	W	I	D
A	L	T	O	B	O	W	N	O	V
S	P	O	O	F	W	I	G	G	L
E	S	P	R	I	T	N	U	B	
	W	R	A	P	M	O	C	H	A
M	A	G	I	J	R	E	Y	E	A
A	B	E	L	N	O	D	S	L	I
P	A	L	L	T	W	O		T	R

Yesterday's answer 3-4



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mar-go Harshman, 22; Patsy Kensit, 40; Jason Newsted, 45; Patricia Heaton, 50

Happy Birthday: Don't jump into something you know little about. Do your research and don't trust hearsay. Invest in yourself, not someone else. Be conservative in your choices and you will be happy with the results. Moderation, precision and practicality will all play a major role this year. Your numbers are 3, 12, 23, 26, 33, 48

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Gauge your time and put it to good use. You will receive help if you ask for it. Don't think too big or you will overstep your bounds. Charm and powerful presentation will help you get what you want. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't be fooled by what others tell you. Someone will want to talk you into something you should not get involved with. Emotional issues will escalate if you try to resolve them without sufficient information. **

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Follow the path laid out for you. It's gauging the time factor involved correctly that will bring about good results. Love is in the stars and a chance to reunite with someone special or re-new vows is looking positive. *****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Prepare to make some adjustments to the way you live and the things you do. You can find far more satisfaction following your dreams. Take a new direction and see how good you feel about the outcome. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be emotional, entertaining and enthusiastic today but don't let that lead to being carefree with your cash. It will be what you do with the ones you love not how much you spend on them that will count. Be honest, charming and fun. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Focus on getting things done, finishing what you start and being serious about the things and the people that mean the most to you. New methods may be presented to you or new jobs offered. Make sure you fully understand what's involved before you agree. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll have everyone eating out of your hand today. Take a creative lead and show everyone how you can turn nothing into something with a few minor adjustments. Your ideas will be hot and your love life even hotter. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Be careful who you trust or what you believe today. Someone may not want to share with you or may want to lead you in the wrong direction. You have to work on your own and within your budget to lessen the stress you are undergoing. **

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Have some fun, travel, communicate and refrain from changing your mind too much or taking on other people's responsibilities. Put today aside for your own pleasure—to purify your thinking and rejuvenate yourself physically and emotionally. ****

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Research ways you can mastermind an

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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idea that's unique and sought after. You have the wherewithal to pull things together and make them work, so don't waste time explaining things to people who lack foresight. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You'll be emotional, charming and in love with life. You can get serious about your future and make solid plans by sharing your intentions with someone you care about. Now is a great time to turn your dreams into reality. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): There will be information withheld from you. Be prepared to put the pieces of the puzzle together before you proceed. Much can be accomplished if you work on your own from home and avoid anyone who will interfere with your plans. ***

Birthday Baby: You have a way with words. You are unique, inventive and like to experiment. You think big and follow through. You are passionate about your beliefs and lean toward the unusual.

Eugenia's Web sites: astroadvice.com for fun, eugenialast.com for confidential consultations

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

8			2	6	5			1
	2				1			
6		2		8				4
7			4		6			8
1				9		6		3
			5				4	
		6						
5			6	3	8			2

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	3	5	8	9	7	2	6	4
9	8	2	5	6	4	1	3	7
4	6	7	2	1	3	9	8	5
3	5	4	1	7	8	6	9	2
7	1	9	6	4	2	3	5	8
8	2	6	9	3	5	7	4	1
6	7	3	4	8	1	5	2	9
2	9	8	7	5	6	4	1	3
5	4	1	3	2	9	8	7	6

Difficulty Level ★ 3/01

WONDERWORD® By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD Solution: 10 letters

A	S	E	C	I	F	F	O	O	L	A	L	D	H	R
E	S	I	A	R	P	P	A	I	V	A	L	U	E	S
T	E	S	L	A	O	G	A	I	I	E	U	D	A	R
A	C	N	E	P	O	I	D	R	I	E	R	N	D	E
U	O	T	®	S	S	A	T	F	V	O	U	S	N	D
L	R	C	®	A	O	S	S	P	E	E	S	L	C	E
A	P	E	®	N	S	E	E	N	P	C	N	E	H	L
V	N	R	®	T	T	T	V	O	O	O	S	O	I	L
E	V	I	A	A	S	R	M	I	I	I	R	O	F	A
D	N	D	A	L	L	M	O	S	T	T	N	L	O	I
I	U	S	A	D	A	A	S	P	N	C	C	T	R	C
U	T	E	U	N	R	U	I	O	E	A	E	N	P	I
G	D	N	D	R	E	O	C	A	R	R	Y	J	U	F
M	E	E	T	S	E	S	S	E	N	I	S	U	B	F
G	D	E	T	C	E	L	E	Z	I	N	A	G	R	O

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Actions, Annual, Appoint, Appraise, Assess, Avid, Business, Carry, Command, Control, Dates, Deals, Direct, Elected, Ensure, Evaluate, Events, Field, Functions, Goals, Guide, Head, Issues, Leaders, Liaison, Meets, Objectives, Offices, Official, Open, Ordain, Order, Organize, Oversee, Process, Profile, Rank, Reports, Rules, School, Trial, Value

Yesterday's Answer: Disinfect

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1 MECHANIC (GAS & DIESEL) (TTH 0016)
Salary:\$3.55-\$3.75/hour. Benefits: Work compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Cargo Express (Saipan), Inc. @234-6616/7/8.

1 ACCOUNTANT (TTH 0017)
Salary:\$600.00-\$1,000.00/monthly. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Marianas Professional Services, Inc. dba LBT Appraisal @234-7325.

1 ARCADE ATTENDANT (TTH 0018)
Salary:\$3.55-\$4.50/hour. Benefits: Medical reimbursable & workers compensation insurance. Contact: Jimin Enterprises, Inc. dba Royal Casino/Grand Poker @235-3455/233-3378.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (TTH 0019)
Salary:\$3.05/hour. Benefits: Workers compensation & medical. Contact: LFP Corporation dba Marg's Kitchen @234-3706.

1 OPERATION MANAGER (SUNT 0017)
Salary:\$4.00-\$5.50/hour. Benefits: Medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: C&R Corporation dba C&R Distributors @235-7379.

1 ACCOUNTANT (SUNT 0018)
Salary:\$3.55-\$6.00/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical coverage. Contact: Juan T. Guerrero & Associates, Inc. @234-8803/04.

1 ACCOUNTANT (SUNT 0019)
Salary:\$3.55-\$6.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical coverage. Contact: Juan T. Guerrero & Associates, Inc. @234-8803/04.

1 CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (SUNT 0020)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation & medical coverage. Contact: Insurance & Business Management Corp. dba Mita Travel @234-7888.

1 ACCOUNTANT (SUNT 0021)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.00/hour. Benefits: Company provided housing; self provided food; workers compensation & medical coverage. Contact: Insurance & Business Management Corp. dba Mita Travel @234-7888.

1 SALES ROUTE DRIVER (SUNT 0022)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; workers compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Heroge Ent., Inc. dba Mountain Fresh Water @234-3588.

1 WELDER (SUNT 0023)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self housing; self food; workers compensation & medical insurance. Contact: Heroge Ent., Inc. dba Diesel Equip. Service @234-3588.

1 POWER PLANT OPERATOR (TTH 0020)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.12/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workers compensation by employer; 80% employer & 20% employee for medical. Transportation is self-arranged.

2 ELECTRICIANS (TTH 0021)
Salary:\$3.55-\$6.69/hour. Benefits: \$5.00/mo. barracks maintenance fee; self provided food; free transportation to & from the job site; workers compensation by employer; 80% employer & 20% employee for medical.

1 DIESEL MECHANIC (TTH 0022)
Salary:\$3.55-\$5.48/hour. Benefits: \$55.00/mo. housing; self provided food; transportation is self arranged; workers compensation by employer; 80% employer & 20% employee for medical. Contact: Triple L Corporation dba Pacific Power House Co. at tel. no. 322-6183.

2 ELECTRICIANS (TTH 0023)
Salary:\$3.55-\$4.75/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

1 MAINTENANCE MECHANIC (TTH 0024)
Salary:\$3.55-\$3.75/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

1 CIVIL ENGINEER (TTH 0025)
Salary:\$3.55-\$7.10/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

1 PROJECT ENGINEER (TTH 0026)
Salary:\$3.55-\$7.50/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

1 DIESEL MECHANIC (TTH 0027)
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1 DRAFTER (TTH 0033)
Salary:\$3.55-\$4.25/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: GPPC, Inc. at tel. no. 234-7900.

1 SALES SUPERVISOR (TTH 0034)
Salary:\$3.55-\$4.00/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

1 GRAPHIC ARTIST (TTH 0035)
Salary:\$700.00 - \$1,500.00/month. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: ICIMA Corporation dba Made is Saipan at tel. no. 322-5123.

1 AUTO PARTS CLERK (TTH 0036)
Salary:\$3.55/hour. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Rajamsbelle Auto Parts & Service at tel. no. 235-8656.

1 AUTO PARTS MANAGER (TTH 0037)
Salary:\$950.00/month. Benefits: self arranged housing; self provided food; medical and workers compensation provided by employer.

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Late spurt by Bryant lifts Lakers over Mavs in OT



LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 30 of his 52 points in the fourth quarter and overtime Sunday to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 108-104 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Bryant scored 50 points in a game for the 22nd time in his career and first time this season. He went 15-of-27 from the floor and, constantly driving and drawing fouls, was 20-of-27 from the line.

Bryant also had 11 rebounds and four assists. Pau Gasol added 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Lakers, who are 12-2 since he played his first game for them on Feb. 5.

Dirk Nowitzki had 30 points for Dallas.

Rockets 103, Nuggets 89

At Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 22 points, Shane Battier added 20 and Houston beat Denver to tie a franchise record with its 15th straight win.

The winning streak is the longest in the NBA this season and matches the longest one in franchise history, reached twice, with the last one coming in their championship season of 1993-94. It was Houston's third straight win since losing All-star center Yao Ming for the season with a stress fracture in his foot and its 19th win in the last 20 games.

Allen Iverson had a tough night, going 7-for-22 and finishing with a 17 points after scoring 38 on Friday. Carmelo Anthony led the Nuggets with 19 points and Kenyon Martin had 12 points and 10 rebounds.

Cavaliers 95, Bulls 86

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 37 points and took over down the stretch to lead Cleveland over Chicago. Wally Szczerbiak added 17 points for Cleveland, which ended the game on a 12-3 run. Larry Hughes led the Bulls with 23 points, shooting 8-of-20 shots from the field.

Spurs 93, Nets 83

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Tony Parker had 25 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and San Antonio won a season-high ninth straight game by beating New Jersey.



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (24) goes up for a shot as Dallas Mavericks forward Josh Howard, left, guards and Mavericks' Jason Kidd looks on during the first half of their NBA basketball game, Sunday, March. 2, 2008, in Los Angeles.

Tim Duncan added 13 points and 14 rebounds, and Manu Ginobili had 17 points as the Spurs beat the Nets for the 10th straight time. New Jersey has not beaten San Antonio since November 2002.

Warriors 110, Trail Blazers 104

At Oakland, California, Stephen Jack-

son hit six 3-pointers while scoring 29 points, Monta Ellis added 22 points and Golden State beat Portland for its seventh win in nine games.

Baron Davis had 18 points for the Warriors, who beat Portland for the first time in three tries this season by scoring early and often. The Blazers had held the NBA's highest-scoring

team under 100 points in both of their previous meetings, but the Warriors surged late for their fifth straight home win over Portland.

Brandon Roy scored 26 points and Travis Outlaw added 17 for the Blazers, who have lost nine of 12.

Wizards 101, Hornets 84

In Washington, Antawn Jamison had 28 points and nine rebounds, and Washington beat New Orleans for its fourth win in five games and second over the Hornets in a week.

Leading 80-79 with 6:40 to play, the Wizards blew the game apart with a 19-0 run. Jamison started it with two free throws and a 3-pointer, then his block of Peja Stojakovic's layup led to a 3-pointer by DeShawn Stevenson that pushed the lead to nine. The Hornets didn't score again until a 3-pointer by Rasual Butler in the final minute. Stojakovic scored 17 points and Chris Paul had 16 to lead the Hornets.

Bobcats 110, Raptors 98

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Jason Richardson scored 30 points and Charlotte took advantage of Chris Bosh's absence to beat Toronto.

Richardson, taking over the brunt of the scoring with Gerald Wallace out indefinitely following a severe concussion, hit 10 of 24 shots and all seven free throws. Rookie Jared Dudley added a career-high 17 points and 10 rebounds for Charlotte, which snapped a five-game losing streak in its second win in 14 games.

Anthony Parker scored 24 points and Bosh's fill-in, Rasho Nesterovic, added 16 for the Raptors.

Celtics 98, Hawks 88

In Boston, Paul Pierce scored 30 points, 17 in the pivotal third quarter, and Kevin Garnett had 20 points and 16 rebounds to lead Boston to its fifth consecutive win.

Ray Allen scored 17, and Kendrick Perkins had 11 points and a season-high 12 rebounds to go with a career-high six assists. Point guard Rajon Rondo had six points and eight assists one day before the

Strained back sidelines Cavaliers center Ilgauskas

CLEVELAND (AP)—Zydrunas Ilgauskas missed the Cavaliers' game Sunday against Chicago because of a strained back, and coach Mike Brown said he isn't sure when the center will return.

Ilgauskas didn't practice Saturday and was examined by team doctors.

"It's kind of a day-to-day thing," Brown said. "More than anything else, it's a precautionary measure. He needs a rest."

Ilgauskas, one of the team's most consistent players, is averaging 13.5 points and 9.6 rebounds a game. He has 25 double-doubles this season and is second on the team in scoring average behind LeBron James. Ilgauskas has started 58 of the Cavaliers' 60 games this season. He missed a game in Milwaukee on Feb. 26 with an upper respiratory infection.

Anderson Varejao started at center Sunday in place of Ilgauskas.

The Cavaliers are also playing without guards Daniel Gibson (sprained left ankle) and Sasha Pavlovic (sprained left foot).

Guard Wally Szczerbiak, who missed Friday night's game, returned to the team. His wife, Shannon, gave birth to the couple's third child Saturday.

Celtics are expected to bring in backup Sam Cassell, who was waived last week by the Los Angeles Clippers.

Kings 120, Heat 109

At Sacramento, California, Ron Artest scored 32 points, Kevin Martin added 29 and Sacramento overcame a 21-point deficit in the second half to beat Miami.

Dwyane Wade had 26 points and seven assists for Miami, Shawn Marion had 19 points and eight rebounds, Jason Williams added 18 points and eight assists, while Ricky Davis scored 14 points.

Pacers 128, Bucks 106

In Indianapolis, Mike Dunleavy tied his career high of 36 points for the second straight game, and Indiana beat Milwaukee for its second straight win.

Danny Granger had 27 points and nine rebounds. He returned to the starting lineup after being suspended a game for striking Chicago's Andres Nocioni in the face on Wednesday.

Michael Redd led Milwaukee with 28 points. Desmond Mason and Mo Williams each added 15 in the Bucks' third straight loss.

SuperSonics 111, Timberwolves 108, OT

At Minneapolis, Kevin Durant scored 25 points, Chris Wilcox added 18 points and 15 rebounds, and Seattle beat Minnesota to snap its four-game losing streak.

Earl Watson had 15 points and Nick Collison 14 for Seattle, which opened its seven-game road trip in dramatic fashion against the worst team in the Western Conference.

Al Jefferson led Minnesota with 30 points and 12 rebounds, while Rashad McCants had 18 points.

Falcons, RB Michael Turner agree on six-year deal



ATLANTA (AP)—Michael Turner says he was won over by the Atlanta Falcons' aggressive efforts when he agreed to a six-year deal Sunday.

"It was really the whole organization and what they're trying to do," Turner told The Associated Press on Sunday when asked what influenced his decision. "Everybody is fresh with a clean slate and trying to build things back up. ... I did not come into the visit expecting to sign so soon. I didn't know what to expect."

A four-year veteran who best known as LaDainian Tomlinson's backup in San Diego, Turner is expected to play a more important role with the Falcons. He is projected as the power complement to speed back Jerious Norwood.

Turner said a factor in his decision was new Falcons' coach Mike Smith's experience as a defensive coordinator with Jacksonville when the Jaguars had success with tailbacks Fred Taylor and Maurice Jones-Drew sharing the carries.

"It will be interesting with a combo type thing," Turner said. "Coach Smith from Jacksonville knows how that works, so hopefully it will be a good thing."

The addition of Turner likely signals the end of Warrick Dunn's time with the team. If the Falcons release Dunn, they will gain about \$3 million in salary cap space.

Turner and a representative of his agent, James "Bus" Cook, wouldn't confirm an ESPN.com report that his contract with Atlanta is for \$34.5 million, with approximately \$15 million guaranteed.

Turner (5-foot-10, 237 pounds) had 228 carries for 1,257 yards and six touchdowns in four seasons with San Diego. He also had three of the longest 11 carries in team history—83, 74 and 73 yards.

He has averaged 5.5 yards per carry in his career.

Atlanta was Turner's first stop in the free-agency period, and Falcons officials made sure he didn't make any other visits.

Turner began his weekend visit Fri-

day, and attended an Arena Football League game in Atlanta with Falcons owner Arthur Blank, general manager Thomas Dimitroff and Smith on Saturday. Blank also owns the AFL's Georgia Force.

Turner said he also had dinner with Blank.

"He's a great guy," Turner said. "He talked about what he's trying to do with the organization and I respected what he said."

Dimitroff said the Falcons believe Turner is ready to be more than a backup.

"We are pleased to be able to add a very talented running back and a player who has produced at a high level in this league when given the opportunity," Dimitroff said. "We think he's ready to take the next step and have a more prominent role in an offense, and we are happy he decided that opportunity is going to be here in Atlanta."

Turner showed his potential as a starter when given the chance to fill in for Tomlinson.

Turner rushed for 316 yards on 71

carries last season and added 164 yards on 43 carries in the playoffs.

In a Week 5 game against Denver, Turner set a career high with 147 yards rushing, including a 74-yard touchdown run, in the Chargers' 41-3 win.

It was Turner's third career 100-yard game.

"Besides being a quality football player, Michael Turner is a quality person," Smith said. "He is the type of player we are looking for to help build our football team. I'm excited that he is joining the Atlanta Falcons."

The Falcons already have added four free agents. The team also agreed to terms with tight end Ben Hartsock of Tennessee on Sunday.

Hartsock (6-4, 265) is a four-year veteran who was drafted in the third round in 2004 by Indianapolis and had 12 catches for 138 yards with Tennessee last season.

The Falcons signed defensive backs Erik Coleman and Von Hutchins on Saturday and re-signed quarterback Chris Redman, who finished the 2007 season as the starter.

Els claims first PGA victory since 2004



PALMBEACHGARDENS, Fla. (AP)—Ernie Els was part of another final-round blunder. Only this time, he was the beneficiary. Ending nearly a four-year drought between PGA Tour victories, Els shot a 3-under 67 Sunday to win The Honda Classic. He finished at 6 under, one shot better than Luke Donald (71) and two ahead of Nathan Green (67).

But this final round will probably be best remembered for Mark Calcavecchia's chip that wouldn't stop, because that ultimately was the break Els needed to finally hoist a winner's trophy once again.

"It has to feel even sweeter, you know, losing so many tournaments and one now going my way," said Els, who snapped an 0-for-47 streak in PGA Tour events, dating to the 2004 American Express Championship in Ireland.

Els and Calcavecchia were tied for the lead as the sun began setting on PGA National. Calcavecchia hit into a greenside bunker at the par-3 15th and his shot from the sand looked fine when it hit the green.

Somehow, it never stopped rolling.

The ball came to rest on a rock ledge across the green. Calcavecchia walked over, tossed the ball into the water and made a double bogey to give Els the outright lead.

"It just didn't grab and just kept rolling and rolling and rolling," said Calcavecchia, a two-time Honda winner. "And that was it."

Els made a cool par on the par-5 finishing hole, then waited to see if anyone would match his score. Donald made a 35-foot birdie at the 16th to get within one, but got no closer, although his birdie chip on the last hole stopped just shy of the cup.

With that, Els stopping hitting balls and slipped on his watch, basking in a winning feeling again.

"To win over here, it's been really my goal," Els said. "So it's a great feeling."

Els got \$990,000 for his 16th career PGA Tour victory, along with the huge shot of confidence that he's sought for so long. Plus, he'll jump a spot to third in the world rankings, passing Steve Stricker.

No, this isn't enough for him to catch Tiger Woods.

But he's at least a step closer in his three-year plan to challenge the world's No. 1 player.

"That's as good as I probably could have played in the final round," Els said. "So it was very satisfying."

Calcavecchia (73), Robert Allenby (70) and Matt Jones (73) tied for fourth, three shots back. Brian Davis, who was at 10 under earlier in the week and led at the midway mark, shot his second straight 73 and finished in a five-way tie for seventh, four shots off the winning score.

"Didn't go my way," Calcavecchia said. "Wasn't my time."

Els wasted a four-shot, final-round lead in a European tour event in Dubai earlier this year, when Woods roared past him for a victory. Els made a colossal mistake on the 18th hole that day, splashing his approach into the water after trying to pull off a spectacular finish.

At Hilton Head last year, he was denied when Boo Weekley chipped in twice in the final holes. And last year in his native South Africa, Els made a triple-bogey 8 on the finishing hole to blow what seemed like another cinch victory.

But this time, a smooth, steady finish—a Big Easy finish, if you will—got it done.

"I think he's one of the best golfers I've ever played with," Donald said. "It's surprising that he hasn't won for so many years on this tour. You know, maybe this win will open up the floodgates a little bit."

There were 14 changes atop the leaderboard Sunday, and the winning score couldn't have been much of a surprise; Mark Wilson won a four-man playoff at PGA National last year after finishing four rounds at 5 under, and this year's Honda provided a similar cluster.

Even after a quadruple bogey Friday, Donald wound up as the last contender standing.

"I take absolute positives from this week," said Donald, the 2006 Honda winner who was third this year at the Northern Trust Open. "It's not a disappointing week by any means."

Calcavecchia never recovered from 15, and

Jones hit his tee ball into the water at the par-3 17th to end whatever chance the rookie had of snaring his first tour win.

Els was alone on the lead and the only player to have a bogey-free round, until he got to the 17th, the end of the famed "Bear Trap" at PGA National. He knocked his tee shot into a bunker, and his shot from there ran nearly 10 feet past the cup. The par putt missed, moving Calcavecchia and Jones both back into a share of the lead at 6 under.

They couldn't stay there, and Els did.

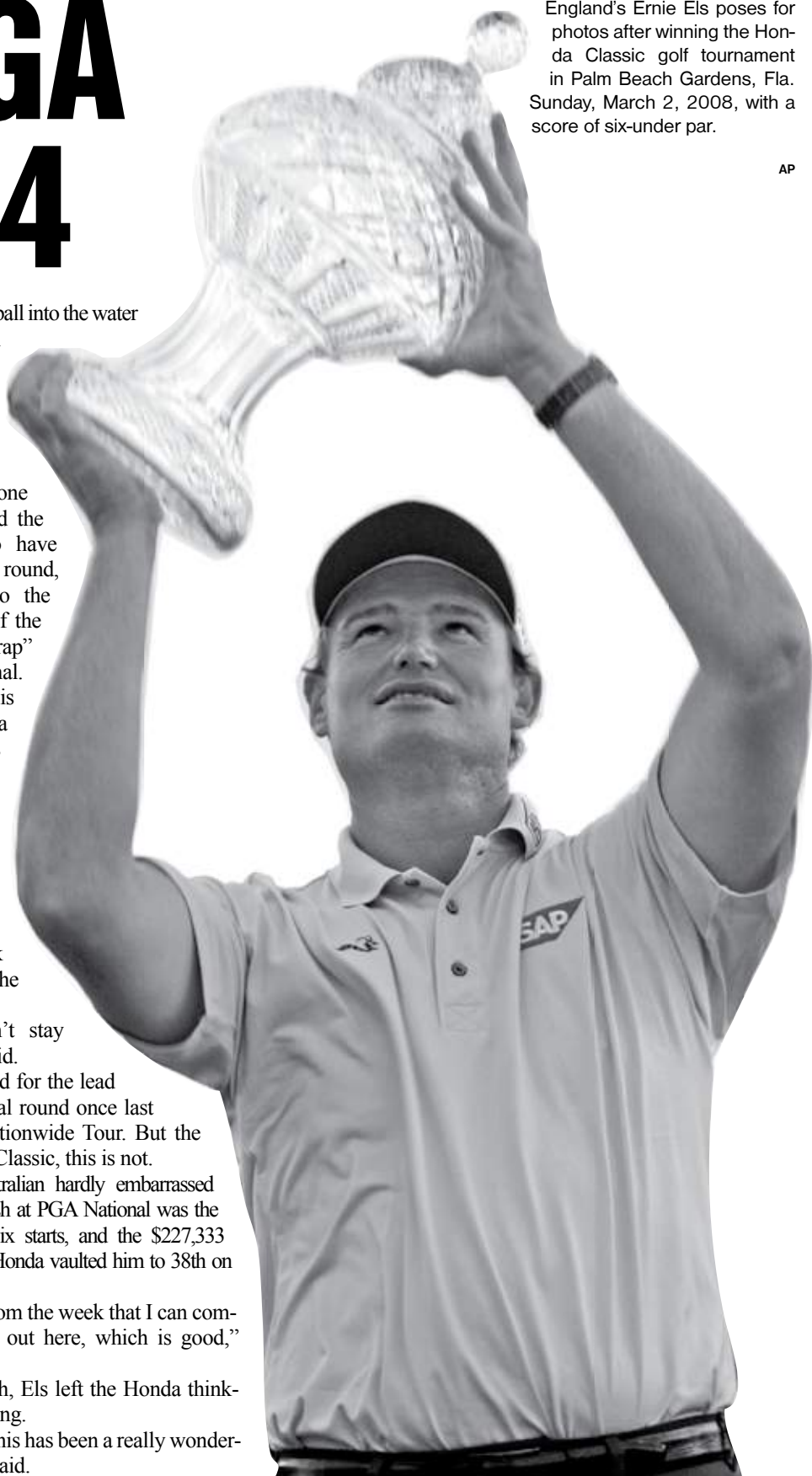
Jones was tied for the lead entering the final round once last year on the Nationwide Tour. But the South Georgia Classic, this is not.

Still, the Australian hardly embarrassed himself. His finish at PGA National was the fifth top-30 in six starts, and the \$227,333 check from the Honda vaulted him to 38th on the money list.

"I can take from the week that I can compete with guys out here, which is good," Jones said.

Oddly enough, Els left the Honda thinking the same thing.

"You know, this has been a really wonderful week," Els said.



England's Ernie Els poses for photos after winning the Honda Classic golf tournament in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. Sunday, March 2, 2008, with a score of six-under par.

AP

Selig says there's no ban on Barry Bonds



SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—Bud Selig says he isn't trying to keep Barry Bonds out of baseball, and the commissioner told the Houston Astros it's up to them whether to have Roger Clemens in their spring training camp.

Selig made the comments in an informal meeting Saturday with reporters at Scottsdale Stadium, where the San Francisco Giants played the Oakland Athletics.

He also confirmed that he met with Giants owner Peter Magowan and that Major League Baseball investigators spoke with the team's general manager, Brian Sabean, about the findings in the Mitchell Report on drugs.

Selig and Magowan sat together for the Cactus League game.

The commissioner declined to offer any other information on the talks but said he still hopes to decide on any punishment as a result of the report by the end of spring training.

"The conversations go on and I said I was going to handle all this on a case-by-case basis," Selig said. "These are very sensitive matters."

Bonds, who passed Hank Aaron to become baseball's home run king last season, was indicted by a federal grand jury on four counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice. The indictment accuses him of lying to a grand jury investigating the Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative's involvement in the distribution of steroids and other illegal performance-enhancing substances.

After 15 seasons with San Francisco, Bonds was not re-signed by the Giants after last season and has not hooked on with another club. He has denied ever knowingly using steroids or other illegal performance enhancers.

Selig said he has a personal opinion on whether Bonds should be in baseball, but he would keep it to himself.

"Every club is free to do whatever they want with whom," said Selig, adding that he had not read Bonds' grand jury testimony that was ordered released by a judge on Friday.

When asked if it was appropriate for Clemens to be in Astros camp, Selig said: "I have said to (owner) Drayton McLane and the Houston club that that's a decision they have to make."

Clemens has appeared at the Astros'

spring training workouts in Florida, sometimes throwing batting practice to minor leaguers, but has not signed to pitch for any team this season. He does have a 10-year personal services contract with the Astros that starts when he retires.

In the Mitchell Report, Clemens' former personal trainer, Brian McNamee, said he injected the seven-time Cy Young Award winner with steroids and human growth hormone—a charge the pitcher has vehemently denied.

The FBI has opened a probe to determine whether Clemens or McNamee lied in recent testimony to Congress.

Clemens told a House committee that he had never used steroids or HGH. McNamee testified that he injected the pitcher with the drugs.

While not speaking specifically about the Giants, Selig indicated he did not believe any team had been unfairly singled out in the Mitchell Report.

"George Mitchell talked to every team, many owners, almost every general manager," Selig said. "Whatever he came up with, he came up with, but he had access to everybody. He didn't need subpoena power there."

A Steinbrenner joining Red Sox Nation?

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Yankees general partner Hank Steinbrenner knows what he'll do with a Red Sox Nation membership card if John Henry sends him one.

"I'll give it to the (Yankees) fans and let them handle it," Steinbrenner said Sunday. "The fans will probably take care of that. Let them decide."

Henry, a former member of the Yankees' ownership group, inducted Steinbrenner into the club Saturday after Steinbrenner challenged the popularity of the Red Sox's fan club.

"I'll think of a good response," Steinbrenner joked.

The Steinbrenner family holds Henry in high regard, and Henry and the Steinbrenners may collaborate on non-baseball ventures in the future.

"We love John Henry," Steinbrenner said. "Our whole family does. We've got no problem with John, I'll tell you that much. I'm sure we'll be working on things with him the

future. There's nothing to talk about yet. A couple things have been talked about, that's all."

Steinbrenner would not get into specifics about any potential projects.

Red Sox spokesman John Blake said he knew of no projects that Henry and the Steinbrenners are collaborating on.

Steinbrenner said Henry has done "an incredible job" as the Red Sox owner.

"It's going to be a tougher rivalry than it ever was in the past," Steinbrenner said. "It's going to continue to be a tough, tough, tough rivalry. And they're always going to be good as long as John is the owner."

But don't think Steinbrenner is easing up on the Yankees' greatest rival, saying New York "will be better, that's the bottom line."

Steinbrenner added: "I haven't soften on the Red Sox any, I don't want to worry the fans. We'll always be arch rivals."

Fiesta-Grand downs Aqua Resort

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



Fiesta-Grand Hotel made it two in a row against Aqua Resort Club this season, dealing the defending champions an 88-82 beating on Sunday in the 2nd Annual HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The win was the eighth straight for Fiesta-Grand to improve to a league-best 9-1 record. They have not lost since suffering from an 86-102 thrashing from last year's final-

ists Hyatt Regency Saipan on Dec. 9, 2007. While Ryan Sanciango, William Opone, and Elmer Esdrelon had their usual numbers, it was the lesser-known Noel David who kept Fiesta-Grand afloat in the second half. David scored 11 of his season-high 19 points in the second half to keep Aqua Resort at bay and help secure the win for the streaking Fiesta-Grand crew. He also had three rebounds, two assists, and two steals and was named Chivas Life Player of the Game. Sanciango had an all-around performance, scoring 27 points, grabbing five rebounds, issuing

five assists, and had six steals to lead Fiesta-Grand's scoring. Opone added 14 markers, two rebounds, and three assists, while Esdrelon tallied 13 points, hauled down seven rebounds, made five assists, had three steals, and blocked one shot. Ryan Manglona had a double-double finish for Fiesta-Grand with 12 points and 10 rebounds as well as a blocked shot. Aqua Resort was led by Darwin Barbo's 24 points, eight rebounds, three assists, and four steals, while Gil Gapor added 20 points. Ziddy Johannes finished with 19 points, seven rebounds, four assists, and three steals, while Glen Aquino

netted 12 points, five rebounds, and three steals. In the second game, Pacific Islands Club won by default against a still winless Aquarius Beach Tower side. **Fiesta-Grand 88** — Sanciango 27, David 19, Opone 14, Esdrelon 13, Manglona 12, Galag 3. **Aqua Resort Club 82** — Barbo 24, Gapor 20, Johannes 19, Aquino 12, Torres 6, M. Achas 1. **Scoring by quarters:** 24-13, 43-34, 61-57, 88-82. **Referees:** Gilbert Espinosa and Dado Vistal

Godfather's Inter bag President's Cup

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Godfather's Inter defeated Onwel, 1-0, in the finals of the President's Cup Football Tournament last Sunday at the Oleai Field inside the Susupe Sports Complex. A lone goal in the 43rd minute of the first half was the only thing Inter needed for the go-ahead score as they played defense in the remainder of the match to avenge their 3-4 loss to the same squad in the 7th Onwel Cup on Nov. 11, 2007. Inter topped Group B after consecutive wins over Freedom Ban-

gle and Wild Bill's Independents to claim the first finals slot. They dealt Freedom Bangle a 6-0 beating after opening up the scoring in the 10th minute for the heavily favored Inter side. Arkie Reusora and Masatoshi Otsuka added to goals each before halftime with the former scoring in the 18th and 30th minute. Otsuka scored back-to-back goals in the 24th and 29th minute. They added one more in the 50th minute of the second half to end Inter's scoring. Inter followed that win with a 2-1 triumph over the Independents with Chris Nelson, 35th minute, and Reusora, 52nd minute, scoring the goals that helped

them earn the first finals berth. The Independents scored early in their game against Inter when they found the back of the net in the 10th minute but could not score after that as their opponents clamped down on their scorers. Onwel topped Group A after consecutive victories over Multinational FC, 4-0, and FC Arirang, 1-0. Jessie Phnosutjit had a hat trick in Onwel's win over MFC while also scoring the lone goal against FC Arirang. However, he could not score in the finals against Inter's defense as Onwel failed to duplicate their win in the Onwel Cup last year. MFC had some consolation when it earned third place after

a 3-1 win over the visiting South Korean team SongPa FC. All winners received a trophy with Inter getting \$200, while Onwel received \$100 and MFC had \$100. Inter's Peter Loken was named most valuable player, while Phnosutjit of Onwel had the most goals with four to earn the most goals scored award. Bo and Karmal were named best goalkeeper and defender, respectively, while Gabriel was awarded the sportsmanship trophy. SongPa FC also presented a plaque of appreciation to Korean Football Association of Saipan president Sung In Kim during the award ceremony. *(Jon Perez)*

Oceania forms university sports group

Eleven countries from Oceania recently formed the Oceania University Sports Association to represent the region in the International University Sports Federation or Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire, FISU. FISU, which is based in Brussels, Belgium, is the world governing body of over 100 national university sports federations that organizes the Winter and Summer Universiades in uneven years and the World University Championships in even years. The Universiade is an international sporting and cultural festival, which is staged every two years in a different city and

which is second in importance only to the Olympics. Representatives from American Samoa, Australia, the CNMI, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu held a meeting from Feb. 23 to 25 in Apia, Samoa with FISU officials to form OUSA. Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Federation vice president and former Pacific Oceania Davis Cup team captain Jeff Race attended and represented the CNMI in the meeting. OUSA will be the Oceania regions representative to FISU-organized Universiade Games,

World Championships, and other competitions. Race said OUSA's purpose is to facilitate greater participation of Oceania tertiary or college student athletes in global and regional sporting events. "In order for this organization to successfully become a FISU member they have to get 12 other Oceania nations to join the world body." Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea are the only Oceania countries that are FISU members, while the CNMI has applied to become a member and is awaiting the approval from the FISU executive committee. Race said OUSA needed to get two-thirds or more of Oceania-

member nations to join FISU in order for the newly formed sports body to be recognized as the official regional representative in the Oceania region. Executive committee vice president Stephan Bergh and director of protocol and education Kole Gjeshaj represented FISU where they met with CNMI's Race, American Samoa's Ed Imo, the Cook Islands' Ray Preston, Vanuatu's Jean Pierre Nirua, Australia's Don Knapp, Fiji's Cliff Benson, New Zealand's Hamish Hopkins, Nauru's Rayong Isimaera, PNG's Molly Geno, FSM's Castro Joab, and Samoa's Karen Nelson. *(Jon Perez)*

VANCE

From Page 28
Training Center. In his spare time, he enjoys running his coaching business via the Internet, as well as reading, learning

guitar and playing poker. The 6th XTERRA Saipan Championship is a unique challenge that kicks off on March 8. The race starts with a 1.5-kilometer swim in the warm and clear waters off Micro Beach. The swim is followed by a 30-

km mountain bike ride that winds through the island terrain and to the top of Mount Tapochao—towering 1,545 feet above sea level and is the highest point on the island. The off-road triathlon concludes with a 12-km trail run that takes athletes through secret jungles and caves.

Bennett, Johnson, and Ruloked are also nominated in the Female Student Athlete of Year category along with three-time monthly winner Wonenberg of athletics and two-time awardee Thea Minor of tennis. Also nominated for the Female Student Athlete of the Year are Jessica Soll (February) and Emily Jones (November) both from tennis.

MENDIOLA'S

From Page 28
first baseman Jason Q. Reyes. Consecutive errors by Reyes put runners at the corners with Kim moving to third, while Alex Jae was safe at first. But Mendiola had other plans that

day and ended the game when he struck out Ha Hyun. Jason M. Reyes went 2-for-3 with one run, a triple, and two RBIs, while John Reyes and Noboyu Otta combined for 4-for-8 and three runs scored. Jeon Soo Hwon and Justin Reyes combined fro 4-for-10 in batting with two runs.

CNMI

From Page 28
Athlete of the Year are January co-winners David Bautista of athletics and baseball's John Mafnas, swimming's Kensuke Kimura (February), tennis' Chris Cajigan (April) and Russell Buenaventura (May), basketball's Manuel Ajoste (July) and Jericho Cruz (December).

<

LADY

From Page 28
followed by the boys match at 4:45pm. Tomorrow, Garapan will take on Kagman in both the girls and boys division, while on Friday, Oleai battles WSR. The nine schools are divided into the South and North groups. Dandan, Koblerville, Oleai and WSR compose the South team while Garapan, Kagman, San Vicente, GTC, and Tanapag are grouped in the North.



A rainbow in the horizon greets 8-and-under swimmers of the 600m distance.

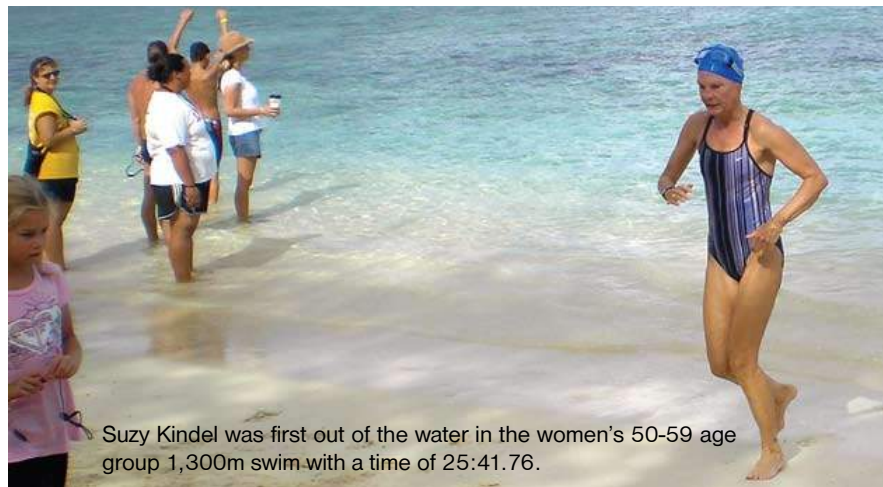


The boys' and girls' 15-19 division 2.5-kilometer swim of the 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim kicks off.

85 take part in Saipan Ocean Swim



Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael Stewart briefs participants of the 8-and-under 600-meter swim of last Sunday's 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim at the Saipan World Resort beach front.



Suzy Kindel was first out of the water in the women's 50-59 age group 1,300m swim with a time of 25:41.76.

PHOTOS AND TEXT By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR



Four teams from Guam and two more local clubs conspired to make last Sunday's 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim one of the most successful in terms of turnout the past couple of years.

Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael Stewart said he was thrilled with the number of participants as well as the performances churned in by the tankers.

"Turnout was great, 85 swimmers compared to just 39 in 2007. Looking at the results, the swimmers all did a great job compared to ocean swims in the past," he said.

Stewart added that it's not only good to see a big crowd taking part in the annual tank-to-tank swim, as the increase in participants also make the competition a lot more interesting and competitive.

"It was a good turnout. The more competition you have the more motivated swimmers can get to perform at their best," he said.

Stewart added that the 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim would not have been possible without the generous sponsorship of DFS Galleria and Tan Holdings Corp.

The SSC head coach also extended his kudos to Marianas Resort and Spa for the great pool conditions during Friday and Saturday's 2008 Saipan International Swimming Meet; as well as to the Saipan World Resort for the beautiful venue and great brunch after the ocean swim Sunday.

The 600-meter distance of the ocean swim was championed by Manukai Athletic Club of Guam's Danielle Atoigue, while SSC's Maxi Braig topped the 1,000m swim.

Benjie Schulte of Tarakito of Guam finished first in the 1,300m swim with Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Rezne Wong winning the 2.5-kilometer swim.



Masters swimmers Manny Sitchon, right, and Vener Urena are all smiles before the swim.



Swimming Center Tsunami Saipan's Shin Kimura finished second to teammate Rezne Wong in the 2.5-km swim with a sterling time of 36:37.



NMASA Sports Hall of Fame inductee Willem "Bill" Sakovich took part in the race and swam the 1.3-km course in 25:54.78.



Danielle Atoigue of Guam's Manukai Athletic Club of Guam finished first in the 600m swim for both boys and girls.



85 take part in Saipan Ocean Swim

Four teams from Guam and two more local clubs conspired to make last Sunday's 30th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim one of the most successful in terms of turnout the past couple of years.

27

Saipan Tribune Sports

Late spurt by Bryant lifts Lakers over Mavs in OT

Kobe Bryant scored 30 of his 52 points in the fourth quarter and overtime Sunday to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 108-104 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.



24

28 TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2008

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Mendiola's two-hitter lifts Dreams past Komoro



JON PEREZ

Shane Mendiola, shown here in a file photo, nearly pitched the season's first no-hitter to lead the Korean Dreams to a 9-1 triumph over Komoro in the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League last Friday at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



Shane Mendiola nearly had a no-hitter in leading the new-look Korean Dreams to a 9-1 win over Komoro in Friday night's game in the 3rd Annual Budweiser-Saipan Major League at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

The Dreams now join opening day winner and defending champion Tanapag Falcons and Rock Steady as early leaders in the standings. Kabur and the D9ers were playing at press time and results were unavailable as of this writing.

Mendiola pitched in no relief allowing Komoro to two hits while recording a season-high 19 strikeouts with four walks. For almost three innings Komoro could not get a hit against the former Little League ace pitcher.

After striking out lead-off hitter M.R. Chawn, pinch-hitting for Kim Ba Da, Mendiola gave up a hit to Kang Byung in the third inning to end his no-hitter.

Komoro was still scoreless after that while the Dreams made three runs in the top of the third. They remained scoreless when Kang was caught on a run-down and Mendiola fanned Jin Han to end the third inning.

Mendiola kept Komoro scoreless until the bottom of the eighth when he gave up a lead-off walk to Cho Jin Koo, who was momentarily left stranded when Cho Jin Wook and Lim Jin Taek struck out.

Kim Jae Young singled to let Cho Jin Koo reach second base and who later scored on an error by Dreams

See MENDIOLA'S on Page 26

Vance to compete in XTERRA Saipan

By MARK RABAGO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Former XTERRA Amateur World champion Jim Vance of the United States will compete in this weekend's 6th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship.

This was confirmed last week by Taga Inc. president Jim Wolf as well as course director Willem "Bill" Sakovich.

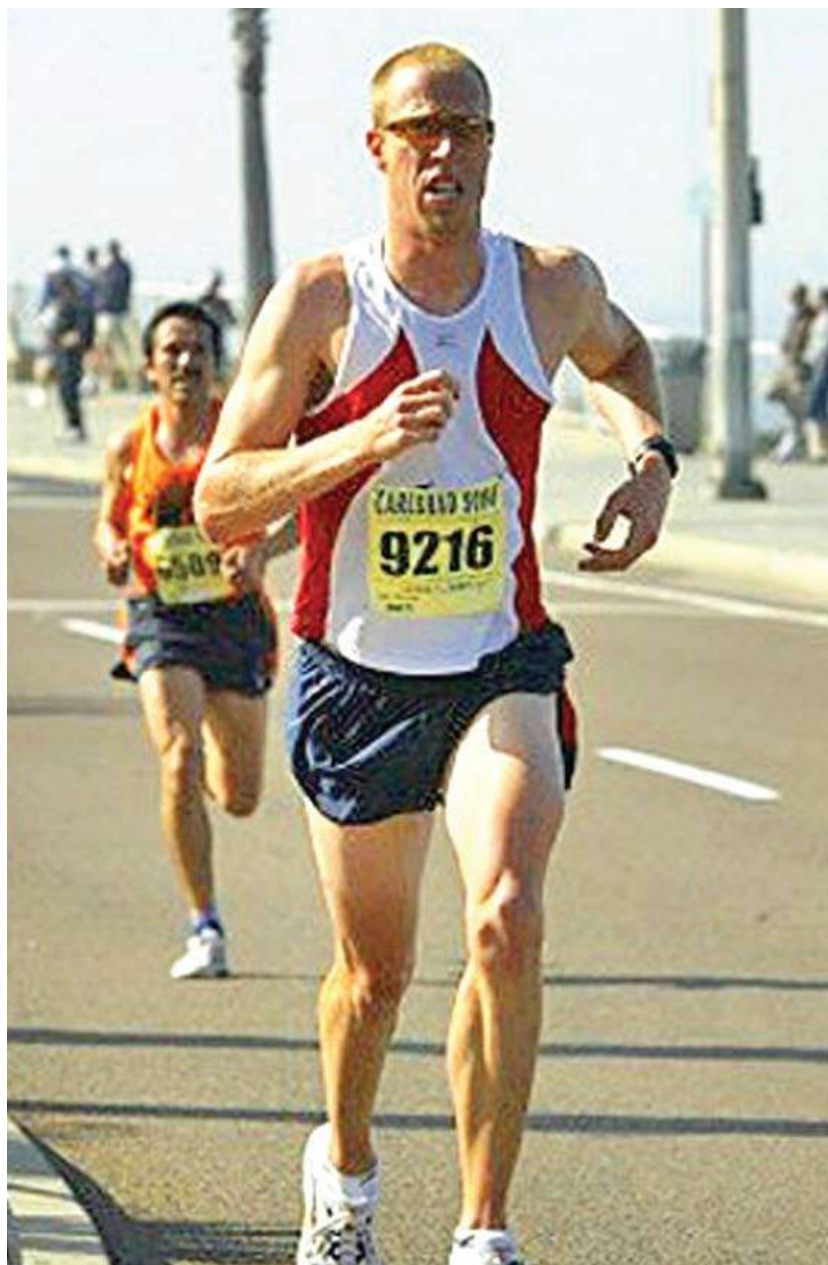
The 6'2" and 165-lb. Vance finished third at the Ironman Florida in 2006 and was third overall in the ITU World Champion 25-29 age group a year before that. He was also named *Inside Triathlon Magazine* Age Group/Pro Triathlete of the Year in 2005 and was the XTERRA Amateur World champion in 2004.

Vance was raised in Michigan and Indianapolis and began running in high school. He was an All-State cross country and track athlete, before walking-on at the University of Nebraska.

There he earned a full-athletic scholarship, two academic scholarships and graduated with his degree in 1999. Vance began teaching elementary school, and coaching high school track and cross country teams. In 2003, he was exposed to his first triathlon, and the success has come quickly ever since.

In late 2005, Vance committed fully to his passion of attempting to make the Olympic Games. He has put his teaching career on hold, in order to devote his life to competing at the highest level.

Vance has been to the US Olympic
See VANCE on Page 26



American triathlete Jim Vance will take part in this weekend's 6th Annual XTERRA Saipan Championship.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lady Umangs win opener vs Tottot

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



The Koblerville Elementary School Lady Umangs opened up the 2008 Elementary Fast-pitch Softball League season with a 6-1 win over the Dandan Tottot yesterday at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

Games in the girls and boys division of the second elementary fast-pitch softball league opened yesterday with all primary schools in the CNMI participating except for the Octopus of San Antonio.

Other participating elementary schools are Tanapag, Gregorio T. Camacho, Garapan, William S. Reyes, Oleai, Kagman, and San Vicente.

Center fielder Jecinia Richards led the Lady Umangs first win going 2-for-3 with a double, two runs scored, and one RBI.

She had plenty of help from starting pitcher Amara Taitingfong, who lasted four innings on the mound allowing three hits with three strike-

outs and no walks.

Angela Achime closed out for Koblerville forcing Stephanie Espayos, Anna Hemley, and Nipi Laniyo to three straight grounders, which was fielded cleanly to first baseman Kristy Sablan by third baseman Nicole Beltau and pitcher Achime.

Gemma Somol, who had a fielder's choice, scored the lone run for Dandan in the second inning when she reached home plate on a Taitingfong error.

The second game between the schools' boys teams was being played at press time.

Games in the Elementary Fast-pitch League will be played every Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with the girls taking the field at 3:15pm

See LADY on Page 26

JON PEREZ

Koblerville's Amara Taitingfong throws to the plate in their girls division game against Dandan in yesterday's opening of the 2008 CNMI Elementary Fast-pitch Softball League at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.



CNMI top athletes to be known today

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER



The CNMI's top athletes and coach for 2007 as well as the newest member of the Commonwealth's Hall of

Fame will be known in today's Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association Athlete of the Year banquet at the pool-side of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

The event will start at 6pm with dinner to be served at 7pm and the presentation for the 2008 CNMI Sports Hall of Fame Class following shortly.

The athletes of the month will then be presented with certificates where from the 29 nominees will emerge the Male and Female Athletes, and Male and Female Student Athletes of the Year.

NMASA president Michael A. White is requesting all persons selected as 2007 Athletes of the Month to be present while officers and directors of each sport federation are also welcome in the event.

Leading the list of nominees are multiple Athletes of the Month winners sprinters Tyrone Omar, Jacque Wonenberg, and Yvonne Bennett, swimmers Cooper Graf and Sarah Johnson, and netters Ji Hoon Heo and Thea Minor.

Other Male Athlete of the Month winners and nominees for the Athlete of the Year are athletics' Jack Kabriel (January), swimming's Rezne Wong (February), basketball's Edsel Mendoza (March), badminton's Raj Jayalal (May), baseball's B.J. Sablan (June), basketball's John Sablan (July), bowling's Robert Talavera (September), baseball's Randal Aguon (November), and athletics' Nick Gross (December).

While athletics' Noriko Jim (January), basketball's Chelsea Ruloked (July), and bowling's Emi Williams (November) are the other Female Athlete of the Year nominees.

Other nominees for the Male Student
See CNMI on Page 26